1609/1822.

# A SHORT VIEW

OF THE

*Riſe and Progreſs of Freedom in Modern Europe,*

&c. &c.

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PRICE 2s. 6d.

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64
MAY

# A SHORT VIEW

OF THE

## *Rise and Progress of Freedom in Modern Europe,*

AS CONNECTED WITH THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO

## THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A REFUTATION OF CERTAIN ERRONEOUS AND INFLAMMATORY DOCTRINES NEWLY PROPAGATED, FOR THE DANGEROUS PURPOSES OF MISLEADING THE PEOPLE, AND SUBVERTING THE ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SOCIETY.

WITH

*A VINDICATION OF THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION,*

PROOFS OF ITS EXISTENCE, EXCELLENCE, AND ENERGY,

IN ANSWER TO

THE CALUMNIES OF THOMAS PAINE.

ADDRESSED TO THE

ASSOCIATED FRIENDS OF THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION.

BY THOMAS HEARN, M.D.

LATE PHYSICIAN TO THE BRITISH FACTORY AT CADIZ.

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——— *Sed motos præstat componere fluctus.*—VIRGIL.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR W. RICHARDSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

1793.

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MAY

TO THE

## Aſſociated Friends of the Britiſh Conſtitution.

*AT the preſent moment, when the Britiſh Senate is aſſembled for the purpoſe of deliberating on thoſe objects that moſt nearly intereſt the dignity of the nation and the ſecurity of the ſtate, when the aſſociated friends of England's freedom ſtand forward in the ſupport and vindication of that conſtitution which has been ſo long their glory and boaſt, it may be deemed ſuperfluous, nay perhaps impertinent, in an individual to obtrude his opinion on ſubjects, which, by long diſcuſſion, are now almoſt exhauſted, and have no longer the powerful incentive of novelty to recommend them.*

*A reſpectful obedience to the laws, and a faithful diſcharge of the duties of his ſtation, are the firſt obligations which every man owes to his country; yet there are ſome inſtances in which a private citizen may be allowed, without incurring the charge of vanity or preſumption, to commit his name to the public.—When the avowal of his ſentiments has no other object than that of endeavouring, at this criſis of public agitation, to obviate the malevolent tendency, and oppoſe the dangerous influence of certain erroneous doctrines, which, in a juſt and equitable government, can have no other end than that moſt deteſtable one—of exciting diſguſt, and promoting a ſpirit of diſcord*

*and ſedition amongſt the people, he has every reaſon to hope for that liberality and indulgence, to whith the rectitude of his intentions give him a ſort of claim.*

*The author of this eſſay having lived many years under arbitrary governments, and having, from contraſt, his mind impreſſed with a ſtrong predilection in favour of that of his own country, expected to find the people exulting in the ſtrength, proſperity, and happineſs, which they enjoy in a degree ſo ſuperior to all other nations. From the high opinion he had conceived of the good ſenſe, ſteadineſs, and patriotiſm of his countrymen, how was he aſtoniſhed to ſee, on his return to England (a few months ſince), that a ſpirit of diſaffection and rage of innovation had ſeized the people, and ſeemed to have extended to the lower orders of the community. The late revolution in a neighbouring kingdom, as exciting the curioſity and attention of all Europe, might in ſome reſpect have accounted for this extraordinary change in the public opinion; but this was not the only motive: the new and bold doctrines contained in the* Rights of Man *contributed not a little to enflame the minds and heat the imaginations of that claſs of men who are ever liable to the ſeductions of the wonderful and marvellous, and afforded thoſe diſcontented and ſeditious beings, who have always been the curſe of ſociety, an apt occaſion of raiſing the uſual outcry of abuſes and grievances, and poiſoning, with their contagious breath, the tranquillity of the land. On*

*peruſing*

*perusing this extraordinary pamphlet, (in the circulation of which, every art and intrigue has been exhausted) the wonder ceased—the discovery of the Copernican System could not be more grateful to the learned world, than that of Mr. P—e is to the vulgar and uninformed—a system which teaches that all governments shall continue unjust, partial, and fraudulent, until man in his natural, uneducated, uncivilized state, shall dictate constitutions, governments, and laws, on the ruin of those established by the learned, the experienced, and the wise, must have been well received by the mob. Had this book been coeval with the art of printing, it may boldly be asserted, that no government would have been established until the universal anarchy and desolation occasioned by such doctrine, would have afforded some Nimrod, some ambitious plunderer, an easy opportunity of raising a new empire, founded on massacre and blood—thus printing would have been the curse of the human species; and had it not been discovered a sufficient length of time to have enabled mankind, by means of the same art, to have applied an antidote to the venom of such a system, it would have been better for the world that literature, and all its boasted labours, had never been known.*

*If the foundation on which this bold, this gigantic superstructure is raised, be found false and erroneous, then must the whole come to the ground; such it appears to the writer of this essay, and such he hopes to prove it.—How far he may succeed in his*

*attempt,*

*attempt, muſt be left to the judgment and impartiality of others. Many years a ſtranger to his native language, he has no pretenſions to cope with Mr. P—, either in ſtrength or energy of ſtile—if his outlines are juſtly drawn, and his colouring natural, it is enough for the ſimplicity of truth. She, like Milton's Eve, is,*

——— " when unadorned, adorned the moſt."

*—'Tis only falſehood and error that require the ſtrong ſtrokes of the bruſh, in order to attract the ſtupid ſtare of the unſkilful and ignorant.*

*He takes the liberty of inſcribing theſe few obſervations to thoſe virtuous men, the friends of ſocial order and the lovers of their country, who have avowed their inviolable attachment to the preſent conſtitution, and made a tender of their lives and fortunes in the defence of the fundamental laws of Great Britain. Should he be thought to merit their approbation, and that of the judicious and enlightened few, he is little ſolicitous for the applauſes of the many, or the huzzas of a multitude, whoſe tumultuous acclamations are equally diſguſting to a liberal mind, whether in the act of burning an effigy or drawing a triumphal car.*

THE AUTHOR.

A SHORT

# A SHORT VIEW, &c.

THE aſpect of affairs on the continent of Europe at the preſent moment preſents to the eye a picture new, and indeed unparalleled in the annals of hiſtory. Such an extraordinary revolution has taken place in the ſentiments of the people, ſuch a total deviation from the uſual and hitherto eſtabliſhed opinions of mankind, as muſt ſtrongly impreſs the public, and excite attention, in ſpite of indifference or even ſtupidity itſelf: the moſt firm, moſt undaunted mind is loſt in ſuſpenſe and aſtoniſhment, in the contemplation of ſo aweful, ſo important a change.

THE foundations of a great and mighty empire, reared by the ſtudied efforts and progreſſive labour of more than ten centuries, ſuſtained by the unlimited power of an arbitrary monarch, ſecured by all the vigilance and ſuſpicious jealouſy of deſpotic ſway, and guarded by almoſt innumerable armies, have been ſhaken to the centre, and ſeem tumbling into ruin.

How a ſyſtem of government ſo ingeniouſly organized, ſo firmly eſtabliſhed by phyſical force and moral habits, could be overturned within ſo ſhort a period, and by ſuch ſeemingly inadequate cauſes, may ſeem a paradox not reducible to the common ſtandard of experience, nor reconcileable to the uniform relation of cauſes and effects.

The ſuperficial obſerver, who reſts upon mere outlines, and penetrates no deeper than the bare ſuperficies of things, may find an eaſy explanation, and content himſelf with believing, that as all empires have had their riſe and fall, and all human inſtitutions verge to corruption and decay, ſo muſt it be to the end of time: the pious chriſtian may think that the degeneracy and iniquity of mankind, when the bitter cup is filled, calls forth the vengeance of heaven and the indignation of an offended deity; but to the penetrating and impartial eye of reaſon objects appear in a different point of view, are more ſtrongly illuminated, and convey more clear and more diſtinct images. The philoſopher, whoſe intellectual faculties have acquired a more juſt perception, and whoſe judgment is cultivated and matured by a long habit of thinking, takes a more accurate ſurvey of human actions; aware of the fallacy and ſpecioufneſs of popular opinion, he nor incautiouſly admits, nor haſtily rejects a propoſition; ever on his guard againſt the deluſions of error, he deliberates with calmneſs,

calmneſs, and decides only from conviction; he analyſes with a view of being able to combine, to organize anew; he divides, with the hope of forming a more perfect aggregate, and a more intellectual whole; he ſees, that from the infinite and confuſed maſs of human opinions, it is neceſſary for the ſimplicity of truth, and the elucidation of fact, to make a juſt and nice ſelection; in order to avoid haſty concluſions, and half-digeſted prejudices, he finds himſelf obliged, from the immediate and viſible effects, to follow up the remote and pre-diſpoſing cauſe; by this chain of reaſoning he is led to the original ſource and fountain of truth ſo celebrated from the remoteſt antiquity—

"Fælix qui potuit rerum cognoſcere cauſas."

ELABORATE ſubdiviſion and minute enquiries, however uſeful in the arts, are the employment of weak and ſuperficial minds: ſuch are "ever puzzled in mazes and perplexed in errors"—thoſe diſtinguiſhed by ſtrong underſtanding and clear faculties look up to primary cauſes and firſt principles; the man who does not endeavour to generalize his ideas muſt be the ſport of local prejudice, and can never merit the name of philoſopher. This ſynthetical ſyſtem has been through all ages univerſally adopted by the wiſe and great: the fixed uniformity obſerved throughout the phyſical creation leads the mind to a conviction, that the moſt complex operations of nature are produced by ſome

ſimple, ſome primary cauſe or cauſes: it would ſeem inconſiſtent with the perfection of the divine Artificer to multiply the agents of his will—one great mainſpring perhaps conveys motion, life, and vigour through the whole machine; and throughout all the varieties of exiſtence, from the loweſt degree of animation to the higheſt ſummit of intellectual perfection, we can diſtinguiſh the traces of this admirable order, this univerſal ſimplicity.

THIS mode of reaſoning may be applied equally to governments and political inſtitutions as to natural and philoſophical enquiries. It would be an object highly intereſting to examine, whether all the abuſes and enormities which have diſgraced the annals of mankind through a ſucceſſion of ages, may not be traced up to ſome few ſimple, ſome original errors in the early inſtitutions of ſociety. An enquiry of this nature, on a large ſcale, could not poſſibly be comprehended within the compaſs of a ſmall volume, and is therefore inconſiſtent with our preſent plan, which is intended only as an outline.

BUT that an eſſential and radical error had pervaded almoſt all the governments of modern Europe, which has not been hitherto ſufficiently developed or attended to by ſtateſmen and legiſlators, has been the remote and original ſource of infinite diſorders, and is now become the immediate and efficient cauſe of the preſent convulſions,

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we ſhall not heſitate to aſſert; this error we conceive to have ariſen from a miſapprehenſion, or indeed a total neglect of the moſt important of all conſiderations in the formation of a government, namely, the ſtrong and irreſiſtible influence which popular opinion, comprehending in its idea the general ſtate of information of the community at large, muſt ever have upon the ſteadineſs, energy, and duration of ſuch government. Upon this ſtate of information and illumination of the people does the exiſtence of government ſo eſſentially depend, that the co-operation of all other moral and phyſical cauſes, the conſiderations of genius, habits, climate, &c. enumerated by political writers, ſhall be found inſufficient to procure permanency and ſecurity to the ſtate, if this great point be not ſcrupulouſly attended to.

ARBITRARY and abſolute power can be ſupported by lawleſs force and the edge of the ſword in all countries and climates, whilſt the community can be retained in a ſtate of dejection and abject ignorance—"arm but a ruſh" againſt the breaſt of the ſubmiſſive ſlave and he ſhrinks before it: but when during the long intervals of peace, and the accidental periods of repoſe which ſuſpended the exterminating ſteel, and interrupted the work of death, the human faculties had time to expand and acquire vigour, then was all the machinery of ſtate intrigue ſet in motion, in order to repreſs this inquiſitive,

this

this active ſpirit, and prevent the people from attaining that degree of intelligence which may enable them to aſcertain their own conſequence, and prevent the violation of their natural rights.

In order to illuſtrate this aſſertion, it will be neceſſary to look back to that period when the revival of letters in Europe, and the ſubſequent advancement of ſcience, had already opened the way to a bolder enquiry and a higher cultivation of knowledge: Gothic darkneſs had been already diſperſed by the rays of philoſophy, and the ignorance of the middle ages had yielded to the inveſtigations of reaſon and the diſſemination of truth; new ſenſations had taken place in the minds of men, and ſcenes novel and highly intereſting were to be preſented on the theatre of Europe.

That continent, which through a long ſeries of ages had been continually agitated by the conteſts of faction and the ſtorms of war, given up a prey to unlicenſed plunder and the ravages of diſcordant conqueſt, and had undergone all the viciſſitudes of alternate greatneſs and humiliation, ſeemed at length, about the beginning of the 14th century, to have arrived at a period of ſuſpenſe, and to have breathed from its toils—ambition ſunk exhauſted under the taſk of deſtruction, and anxiouſly panted for an interval of reſt; the monſtrous fabric of the feudal ſyſtem, after a painful and dubious ſtruggle, marked with violence and blood, at laſt gave way: the

vaſt

vaſt Coloſſus fell to the ground and cruſhed half mankind in its ruin—the emancipation of the human race ſeemed to be at hand, and the long-eſtabliſhed reign of oppreſſion and injuſtice, which had ſo long waſted the earth, to have received a laſting and final blow.

The calm which ſucceeded this event was favourable to the cauſe of humanity, and opened the eyes of the more enlightened part of the people, who now began to ſcrutinize and enquire into their own ſtate of humiliation, the ſources of ſocial inſtitution, and the mutual obligation of allegiance and protection, (if we may be here allowed a feudal expreſſion). On following up the ſubject they began to ſuſpect that a ſtrange and unnatural deviation from the original intention, or at leaſt its ſpirit, had taken place; they aſſembled, deliberated, became ſenſible of their grievances, remonſtrated againſt the injuſtice and partiality of the eſtabliſhed modes of government, and at length talked ſo loudly of abuſes, that the ruling powers found it neceſſary to temporize with a body they themſelves had raiſed, in oppoſition to the inſolence of the feudal chieftains, and at laſt to yield to the force of a tempeſt which they could no longer reſiſt; they now began to perceive, for the firſt time, that public opinion and the voice of the people ſhould be conſidered of ſome moment, and that that body boldly looked forward to no leſs

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than an influence in the tranſactions of the legiſlative aſſemblies: hence it was found expedient to reſtore to them a ſhare of that political conſequence of which they had been ſo long deprived, and which they now felt themſelves ſufficiently ſtrong to lay a claim to.

Almost all the governments of Europe found themſelves obliged at this period to adopt the popular language of ſecuring and reſpecting the rights of the people; yet few are the countries that have been ſo fortunate as to have fixed this eſſential point on a firm or ſteady baſis. It is a melancholy truth that the body of the people in all regions of the earth and in all times have been doomed, probably from the limitedneſs and imperfection of human nature, taken on a general ſcale, to be the prey of faction, oppreſſion, and tyranny: to this imperfection and the mutability of all temporal inſtitutions muſt be attributed the ſucceſſive decline and fall of all the governments and empires which have been raiſed by ambition, and ſupported by fraud and rapine, until that period when accumulated corruption had ſapped their foundations, and precipitated their ruin: this painful, this diſtreſſing fact we ſhall leave to be deplored by the humane and enlightened philoſopher, whilſt we return to the walk of unempaſſioned enquiry.

The freedom of Europe was ſtill in the cradle, but looked forward with confidence to adoleſcence

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and a ſtate of vigorous manhood: the people had acquired decided privileges, were conſidered as a diſtinct and powerful body, and formed a part of the legiſlative aſſembly.

The Cortes of Spain and the Parliaments of France made themſelves reſpected in the public acts of their reſpective nations—the triumph of the people was conſidered as compleat; but the hour was not yet come, the public mind was not ripe, not fully acquainted with its own reſources and ſtrength; its perception was not yet become ſufficiently quick to ſeize and embrace the brilliant object which lay within its graſp—the maturity of time and a higher degree of cultivation were ſtill wanting.

The lapſe of a few years made it evident that the new authority of the people was raiſed upon a foundation of ſand; it was ſoon felt that the public aſſembly which repreſented the multitude was a grievous innovation, and an invincible barrier againſt the incroachments of the Crown and the rapaciouſneſs of an inſolent and powerful nobility, who had been ſo long in the habits of conſidering the people as their vaſſals, and as appertaining to the ſoil.

Some ſudden, ſome deciſive counterpoiſe was neceſſary, in order to put a ſtop to this growing, this dangerous influence of the people. Many and complicated are the concomitant cauſes which

combined to overthrow the fair fabric of man's freedom: but as it is inconſiſtent with our plan to enter into minute diſcuſſions, we ſhall only glance over the moſt ſtriking points, and haſten forward to our principal object.

LIBERTY yet remained almoſt ſtationary when the ambition and rivalſhip of the Emperor Charles the Fifth and Francis the Firſt engaged theſe two great empires in fierce and bloody contention; the prize of ſuperiority was held out and fought for, during a long ſeries of years, with all the frenzy of national oppoſition and invincible obſtinacy; the blood and treaſure of both nations were ſquandered with a prodigal hand; their reſpective ſubjects animated, and as if inſpired with the enthuſiaſm of their monarchs, ruſhed to war with that violence and impetuoſity which are ſo ſtrongly characteriſtic of the high ſpirited notions of thoſe times, and all private and domeſtic concerns were abſorbed and totally forgotten in the anxiety of the conteſt; the as yet unaccompliſhed intereſt of the people was ſacrificed to the competition and knight-errantry of two Princes, who ſeemed to have no other end of their exiſtence than the deſtruction of each other.

How far ſimilar circumſtances may affect and are inimical to the cauſe of freedom, not yet firmly eſtabliſhed, needs no comment: we have only to refer to the different periods of the hiſtory of France

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and England, in order to ſee how general a policy it was amongſt the potentates of thoſe days to engage their ſubjects in foreign wars, in order to give employment to a reſtleſs and turbulent valour, which muſt have otherwiſe burſt upon their own heads.—Thus, independent of the loſs of men and public wealth, the influence of the Crown and nobility was increaſed in an enormous proportion, by taking off the attention of the people from the more important object of eſtabliſhing their own rights and privileges at home.

Even this could not perhaps have reſiſted the torrent of popular influence, which ruſhed forward with rapidity to that ſtandard which it ſhould naturally hold in the ſcale of public affairs, had not other powerful cauſes interfered.

During the courſe of thoſe wars the nobility, conſidering themſelves, according to the prejudices of the times, as the natural guardians of the Throne, had particularly attached themſelves to the cauſe of the Prince; this connection and mutuality of intereſts led the way to a coalition highly inimical to the intereſts of the people. The King and nobles formed a faction againſt this upſtart power, which pretended to curtail their privileges, and became a troubleſome ſpy upon their uſurpations.—The name of the popular aſſemblies, it is true, was ſtill retained in order to amuſe them, but their meetings were protracted and poſtponed;

the fatigues of war had exhauſted their vigour; their firmneſs forſook them; the apt moment had elapſed, and the great cauſe was reſerved for a more enlightened future generation.

At this critical moment the newly eſtabliſhed balance of power in Europe afforded a ſpecious pretext for the inſtitution of ſtanding armies: theſe bands of mercenaries, reduced to ſtate machines, and totally inſenſible of the vile purpoſes for which they were retained, became the inſtruments of intimidating the people, and unconſciouſly conſummated their own degradation, which was neceſſarily involved in that of the multitude. In order to ſuſtain this ſyſtem of military tyranny, and reduce the minds of the people to that ſtate of ignorance and timidity which was eſſentially neceſſary to the exiſtence of political ſlavery, the tribunal of the Inquiſition was inſtituted on the Continent; this alone was wanting for the completion of the work: an unuſual concurrence of circumſtances which had then taken place in Europe ſeemed to have pointed out the expediency of adopting this meaſure; the falling off of England from the orthodoxy and ſupremacy of the Romiſh church, which had already taken place, the religious diſſenſions which were diſſeminated through the empire of Germany, and threatened to involve that country in one univerſal hereſy, alarmed the holy See; he found his infallibility began to be

called

called in queſtion, the ſanctity and dignity of the church were in danger, and the rock of St. Peter, with its lofty ſuperſtructure, ſhook to its baſe.

THESE were powerful and obvious motives for the inſtitution of the holy office; the different Princes who remained ſteady to the intereſts of the Pope were not inſenſible of the manifeſt advantages which may be derived from the adoption of a plan which afforded them the infallible means of quelling that bold ſpirit of enquiry which had ſpread with ſuch rapidity, and ſeemed to threaten no leſs than deſtruction to their power; they clearly foreſaw, that if the people came off victorious in the conteſt, their own ruin muſt have been involved in that of the church, and that they would be the next victims offered up on the altar of public indignation; the criſis of their fate ſeemed to depend upon the reſolution of a moment, and they did not heſitate to co-operate with his Holineſs's views in ſupporting with fire and faggot his ſupremacy and infallibility in deciding on articles of faith.—The Moreſcoes were baniſhed from Spain; the repeal of the edict of Nantz expelled thouſands of opulent and induſtrious citizens from the boſom of their country; and France ſhall have ever to lament an act of fanaticiſm, which not only deprived her of a large portion of her moſt uſeful inhabitants, but at the ſame time transferred their induſtry, manufactures, and wealth to a rival nation, who wiſely

opened

opened her arms for the reception of the unhappy fugitives.

But theſe loſſes were conſidered of very little moment when put in competition with the more eſſential point of ſtopping up the ſources of inſtruction and information from the people, on which depended the eſtabliſhment of a fixed ſyſtem of eccleſiaſtical and political tyranny.

Thus, by a fatal concurrence of baneful cauſes, was blaſted that fair plant, which had already put forth its tender leaves, and promiſed a goodly ſhew of bluſhing fruit; thus was loſt the cauſe of freedom, and thus was the moſt fertile part of Europe given up once more a prey to lawleſs force, the ſway of tyrants, and to the mercileſs graſp of unbounded prodigality.

That ambition and the luſt of power ſhould have united the kings and nobles againſt the people in the common cauſe of rapine and plunder is not to be wondered at; it is uniformly conſiſtent with the general courſe of human things and the hiſtory of all nations; but that that divine religion, which ordains charity and univerſal love, ſhould be made ſubſervient to the baſe purpoſe of enſlaving the human mind, is an outrage ſo incredible, a profanation ſo inconſiſtent, that reaſon rejects it with indignation—When the chriſtian religion commands obedience to the laws and ſubmiſſion to the higher powers, it would be a blaſphemy to ſuppoſe

poſe that this unqualified precept can extend to thoſe corrupt and iniquitous uſurpations which have been dignified with the name of Governments—Could that religion have tied down the ſubject to the duties of juſtice, patience, and charity, in order to make him a more eaſy prey to oppreſſion and licentiouſneſs? Do not the obligations of allegiance and ſubmiſſion, on the part of the governed, neceſſarily include the idea of juſtice and protection on that of the governors? Forms or modes of government amongſt the moſt ignorant and unlettered nations are not conſidered as articles of faith; nor does an implicit belief in the myſteries of religion by any means imply a blind and irrational ſubmiſſion to human inſtitutions, founded on abſurdity, ſupported by principles deſtructive to humanity, and ſubverſive of natural order.

From that epoch to the preſent, few indeed have been the efforts in favour of the cauſe of freedom. Feebleneſs and degeneracy are ever the characteriſtics of ſlaves; in this degraded ſtate of man his faculties became ſuſpended and enervated: that energy of mind, that ſoul-inſpiring enthuſiaſm which fires the breaſt of the patriot, and urges him on to acts of public beneficence, cannot be felt by the wretch who is a tyrant's tool, and groans in ſervitude.

However, for the honour of human nature, we muſt not omit to mention the noble, the immortal

mortal ſtruggle of the Netherlands. The haughty, the imperious Philip was forced to ſwallow the bitter draught, and was taught to know, that neither the armed hoſts of his extenſive empire, nor the united treaſures of two hemiſpheres could ſubdue the hardy minds and undaunted valour of what may be called a few naked fiſhermen: aſhamed and abaſhed, he was obliged to retire from the inglorious conteſt, and left to poſterity this great, this awful leſſon, that whilſt conquerors and tyrants periſh and paſs away from the records of time, the public ſoul of freedom is invincible and immortal.

SWISSERLAND, which had ſo long ſubmitted to the yoke, reſiſted, and at length ſhook off the chains of the Houſe of Auſtria; the increaſe of ſecurity, opulence, and conſequence which ſhe has attained ſince that revolution, is a ſtriking proof of the value and ineſtimable advantages of a free conſtitution, and a new cauſe of exultation to the friends of civil liberty.

IT would not be conſiſtent here to paſs over in ſilence that diſtinguiſhed country where the privileges of the people had at thoſe remote periods attained a certain degree of ſecurity and permanency. It would be ſuperfluous and in my mind preſumptuous to enter into even a recapitulation of the hiſtory of the riſe and formation of the Houſe of Commons of England; a period of ſuch high

importance

importance to this country, and indeed to all Europe, muſt be perfectly known to every man of any moderate ſhare of information; we ſhall content ourſelves therefore with obſerving, that this aſſembly, the delegated repreſentatives of and truſtees for the rights of the people, is the only one which in the hiſtory of modern times can claim the pre-eminence of an eſtabliſhed and permanent legiſlative body; the inſtitutions of this nature which had been formed on the Continent were feeble and tranſient, and bore no degree of ſimilarity either as to influence or duration. On following up the records of this auguſt ſenate, this ſchool of liberty, we can evidently trace out this ſtriking outline, this leading feature, that, though it may be allowed that its vigilance was lulled at particular moments and under certain circumſtances, though ſome of its members might in the dull intervals of peace and indolence nod over their duty, and forget that ſteady virtue which ſhould inceſſantly call them back to the moſt ſacred, the moſt important of all truſts, yet in the hour of danger, when the emergencies of the times required vigour and exertion, when the bold faction or incroaching influence ſtood forth avowed, and threatened danger to the general weal, then the ardent ſoul of public freedom burſt from its ſlumbers, and called forth that manly, that patriot virtue

which has always characteriſed the diſtinguiſhed ſons of this happy iſland.

Amidst a ſucceſſion and variety of convulſions which threatened the conſtitution and the ſecurity of the ſtate, it cannot be denied, but that this aſſembly has ſupported the cauſe of freedom and the liberty of their country; that they have conducted themſelves with that firmneſs and energy which ſhould actuate the deliberations of a ſenate perfectly ſenſible of the importance of their delegation, and which in the preſent ſtate of things may, not improperly, be conſidered as an epitome of the repreſentation of the whole human ſpecies. Though a free people, ever and juſtly jealous of their privileges, may occaſionally murmur, and challenge a perfection almoſt incompatible with the inſtability of human affairs, yet, from the decided abilities and unſhaken integrity of ſeveral members of that patriot band, it may be aſſerted that any abuſes inconſiſtent with the ſanctity of political juſtice, ſhall be effectually guarded againſt, that the government acting under their preſent moſt excellent conſtitution is as fully competent to that purpoſe, as any that could poſſibly be deviſed, and that the people of England may look forward with confidence to a long continuance and even perpetuity of their rights and liberties.

Whilst thus in theſe few countries that great outline of government, the effectual repreſenta-

tion of the people was preſerved, the cauſe of liberty was not totally loſt in Europe; the great trunk had been cut down, but the germ had taken root anew, and waited the favourable ſeaſon of reproduction. Yet, notwithſtanding, ſo firmly fixed was the ſyſtem of abſolute government on the Continent as to almoſt preclude every reaſonable hope of a reſtoration of the repreſentative right of the people: the loſs of freedom was almoſt forgotten in the ſplendour and oſtentatious grandeur of the French and Spaniſh monarchies. Theſe nations had aſſumed the ſpecious titles of limited and moderate governments: their reſpective ſubjects, ſo far from complaining, ſeemed to glory in the unbounded magnificence of their monarchs, and to exult in the brilliancy of their own chains: the grand machine of the ſtate moved on with ſlow and ſolemn majeſty, and was interrupted only by the occaſional overflowings of rival ambition, and the competition for pre-eminence and ſuperiority: all ideas of moderation and political juſtice muſt have ſunk for ever under the weight of ſuperior power, had not the arrogance and bold pretenſions of thoſe haughty Princes been overawed and uniformly checked by the ſuperior genius and intrepid valour of Great Britain. This circumſtance, ſo glorious for England, and ſo fortunate for mankind, muſt be ever conſidered as one of the principal cauſes which

prevented the total annihilation of freedom, and the eſtabliſhment of a ſyſtem of univerſal tyranny and deſpotic power over all the kingdoms of Europe.

As the genius and character of nations, influenced by education and other cauſes, cannot be kept ſtationary, and muſt change from age to age, ſo muſt the form of government, which ſhould indiſpenſably correſpond with the habits, modes of thinking, and degrees of information of the community at large; the conſtant and ſucceſſive revolutions which have ſhaken the earth from one extremity to another ſhould convince us, that no ſyſtem, no form of government can be permanently adapted to beings of ſo unſteady, ſo changeable a nature as man. Neither the Juſtinian Pandects, nor the Code of Theodoſius, though perhaps calculated for the then ſtate of ſociety, and the times in which they were compiled, are adapted to the inhabitants of Europe in the eighteenth century: the celebrated and ingenious Filangieri has pointed out with a maſterly hand the incongruouſneſs of the laws and political inſtitutions of our days. By an accurate analyſis he has ſhewn that they conſiſt of a confuſed mixture of the cuſtoms and manners of the uncivilized and barbarous nations, who took poſſeſſion of Europe after the deſtruction of the Roman Empire, with the unjuſt and unnatural inconſiſtencies of the feudal

feudal ſyſtem, and combined with the juriſprudence of the Romans: he ſtrongly inſiſts on the abſurdity of our adopting a monſtrous jumble of inſtitutes and laws, which had been formed in the moſt remote and ignorant periods of ſociety, and are now become contradictory and totally irreconcileable with the preſent ſituation of mankind.

THUS it is that civil and political eſtabliſhments muſt always keep pace with the illumination of the public mind, and change according to the variations of the ſtate of man. Power has been conſtantly conferred by, and wreſted from, the people, and as conſtantly abuſed. Uncontrouled authority ſeems to have a baneful influence on the human heart, and few are the examples of permanent virtue, or ſtrict moderation in that dangerous ſtation. The hiſtory of mankind, and the experience of ages, ſtrongly enforce a belief that the multitude are incapable of governing themſelves, and hence are reduced to the neceſſity of confiding that important truſt, which cannot be exerciſed by the whole, to the virtue of one, or of a few; this delegation cannot, or, unfortunately for mankind, has not hitherto been conferred, without giving up at the ſame time ſuch a proportion of power as precludes a poſſibility of revoking the grant; ſhould the delegate become corrupt or arbitrary, he is already poſſeſſed of the means of ſupporting his authority by uſurpation;

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for authority maintained againſt the conſent of the whole body of the people is virtually uſurpation; and againſt this abuſe, when eſtabliſhed by military force, there is no remedy, no redreſs, other than inſurrection.

Although the truth of this propoſition cannot be denied, and that every people have a right to oppoſe a ſimilar ſtate of tyranny, it muſt be confeſſed that the experiment has been ſometimes fatal, is always dangerous, and moſt frequently unſucceſsful.

Such nearly has been the ſtate of all the nations on the Continent, very few excepted; the people had not, from almoſt time immemorial, been admitted to that rank and importance which their great preponderance entitled them to in the ſcale of public affairs; deſpiſed and unprotected by that power, which they themſelves had armed for their defence and ſecurity, they were abandoned to all the inſults of unfeeling pride, and the depredations of inſatiable ſquanderers; but this unnatural perverſion of the order of things muſt have its limits, the day of retribution was to come, when the irreſiſtible advancement of literature and ſcience was to make the people ſenſible of the enormity of their grievances, the importance of their claims, and at the ſame time the juſtice of their ſeeking effectual redreſs by the recovery of their loſt privileges.

If the moſt moderate governments, however well organized, be defective in ſome eſſential points, and found ſubject to corruption and degeneracy, if not renovated and improved in proportion to the more general diffuſion of knowledge, we muſt not wonder that one founded on original injuſtice, and ſupported by an eſtabliſhed ſyſtem of rapaciouſneſs and oppreſſion, ſhould fall to the ground, and experience a more rapid decline; deſpotic ſtates are ever expoſed to convulſions and danger; tyranny in the eye of reaſon is not government; it is a ſtate of violence, which muſt be ſupported by the ſword: unqualified force and the ſtrong law of neceſſity may bind down the ſlave, intimidate the turbulent, and reſtrain the brave (if the laſt can be ſuppoſed to exiſt under ſuch governments): but muſt not at length the very inſtruments of ſuch a power become more dangerous to the uſurper, than even the inſurrection of the people? When ſtanding armies become ſenſible of their own ſtrength, muſt not the deſpot himſelf ſubmit to their dictates? The very banditti, whom he had hired for the baſe purpoſes of maintaining his uſurpation, and intimidating his vaſſals, muſt ultimately become his maſters. Hiſtory has furniſhed us with many dreadful examples of military tyranny, and the Pretorian have not been the only bands that contributed to the fall of empires; but when nations began to emerge

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from that ſtate of general ignorance which was ſo indiſpenſably neceſſary to the exiſtence and exerciſe of deſpotic power, when the diffuſion of knowledge became more univerſal, and extended to all ranks of the community, the ſoldier himſelf perceived that it was no longer his intereſt to form part of a body which militated againſt public freedom, and had been hitherto found inimical to the rights of the people; at length he became ſenſible that his military appointment was neither irreconcileable with the prior claims of ſocial duty, nor oppoſite to his obligations as a citizen; and conſidered the trade of war, as it had been carried on, to be no other than an artful ſyſtem, eſtabliſhed on the ruins of feudal barbarity, formed for the purpoſes of ambition, the ſupport of tyrants, and the deſtruction of his fellow-creatures.

Hence it is evident, that governments muſt become more equitable and mild, according to the progreſs of knowledge and a more enlightened ſtate of civil ſociety. An ignorant and unlettered people can patiently ſubmit to the moſt outrageous acts of violence and oppreſſion, and ſleep over their chains with an indifference bordering on brutal ſtupidity; the moſt fertile and favoured regions of the earth, where freedom, joined hand in hand with liberal knowledge, had once brought forth, nurtured and matured the faculties of man, where genius ſmiled, and civil life had

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gained its ultimate perfection, where poliſhed Greece had reared the empire of refinement and of reaſon, have for ages languiſhed in decay and hopeleſs ſervitude, and bend beneath the iron ſway of haughty Ottoman; the plains, where Tyre and Carthage ſtood, are now the prey of rude barbarians, and the ſport of ruffian power; the peaceful Hindoo has, from the remoteſt time, ſubmitted calmly to the yoke of ſucceſſive tyrants, and ſeems to have taken no intereſt in the ſcenes of rapine and ſlaughter that conſtantly ſurrounded him: the influence of a mild climate, an abundant ſoil, his habits of life, religion, and rigid temperance, together with his contented ignorance, all contribute to enervate his mind, and render him incapable of reſiſtance; yet it would not ſeem unreaſonable to believe, that all theſe phyſical and moral cauſes would not alone be ſufficient to retain him in that ſtate of ſhameful humiliation, were his mind enlightened; were the art of reaſoning known in his country, were ſeminaries, colleges, univerſities, academies of ſcience and belles lettres, libraries, and a public education eſtabliſhed, it may be preſumed that even the Hindoo himſelf would be rouſed from his lethargic inaction, and ſtand forth in bold vindication of the rights of humanity.

Personal bravery, ſpeaking abſtractedly, cannot be ſaid always to depend on bodily ſtrength,

or vigour of conſtitution; the cultivated mind, which has acquired a clear perception of its natural rights and inalienable privileges, aſſumes a degree of firmneſs and enthuſiaſm unknown to uncultivated nations. The body may ſhrink with cold and nakedneſs, the ſpirits ſink with hunger and fatigue, and the machine loſe its tone, firmneſs, and energy; but a mind, filled with the elevating idea of its own independence, looks forward to its object with compoſure and dignity, contemplates it as the ſole end of its exiſtence on earth, and abandons it only in death. Cultivation, which calls forth the latent powers of the mind, infallibly leads to the idea of liberty, and liberty alone is capable of impreſſing man with a juſt conſciouſneſs of his high miſſion, and reaſon teaches him to conſider it as the firſt of ſublunary bleſſings. Such a man becomes brave from principle, and the conviction of his being appointed the natural guardian of this ſacred depoſit, gives him that elevation of ſoul which ever diſtinguiſhes, and is indeed the peculiar characteriſtic of the truly brave.

May it not then with perfect confidence be aſſerted, that an inſtructed and enlightened nation are incapable of ſubmitting to the groſs oppreſſions of an arbitrary government, and that when this meaſure of public knowledge has been once attained, the government muſt either become more

moderate, juſt, and conformable to the impreſſions made on the mind of the community, or a revolution muſt unavoidably enſue; and that the degree of information of the whole people muſt be ever conſidered as the univerſal ſtandard, by which the moderation, or ſeverity, of the government muſt be regulated; this is the leading feature, the great criterion, by which the operations of the ruling powers muſt be always determined: without it, all is confuſion, all is error, and muſt tend to diſorder and anarchy.

THESE few previous obſervations lead us directly to our principal point, the conſideration of the preſent ſtate of politics on the Continent. Had the late government of France been conſiſtent with its own ſyſtem of oppreſſion, it might ſtill have to boaſt of the pompous title of the French Monarchy; it ſhould have learned from the barbarous policy of other deſpotic governments, that in order to ſecure permanency to uſurpation, and an uncontrouled dominion over the perſons and properties of the people, it was neceſſary to preſerve the ſame arbitrary influence over their intellects. Had they wiſely followed the example of Spain, in ſuppreſſing all the ſources of public information; had they not aboliſhed the inquiſition, and thereby opened all the avenues to ſcience, and excited the curioſity of an inquiſitive and animated people, the Grand Monarch might ſtill ſit ſecure-

ly on his throne; had not the vanity of Lewis XIV. ſtill more unbounded than his ambition and prodigality induced him to reconcile contradictions by the oſtentatious introduction of literature into a country whoſe political exiſtence, according to the principles of the old government, moſt aſſuredly depended on their ignorance and unacquaintance with their privileges as citizens, and their rights as men; the brilliancy and buſtle of his reign concealed the danger, and prevented the immediate tendency of this eſſential error, ſo unexpected, ſo auſpicious to the liberty of the nation; but the rapid and univerſal progreſs of letters in that country, from that period downwards, and on ſo broad a ſcale, as indeed to have eclipſed all the nations of Europe, made a deep and ſtriking revolution in the minds of the peple; they ſaw their grievances, and began to wince under the galling weight of their chains; but the period of their emancipation ſeemed ſtill remote and at an interminable diſtance. The author of this eſſay, who in the beginning of the reign of Louis XVI. had ſpent ſome years in France, had many occaſions of knowing the diſguſts and diſcontents of the people, particularly at Paris, where he remembers the general exultation on the disfiguring and maiming ſeveral beautiful ſtatues at the royal palace of Chantilli; though the French were enthuſiaſtic admirers of the fine arts, and lamented

the violation offered to thoſe valuable monuments of human genius, yet they rejoiced in an act which conveyed ſo ſtrong, ſo public a diſapprobation of the immoderate voluptuouſneſs and prodigality of the court; they ſaw that the huſbandman and laborious artiſt remained dejected and oppreſſed, whilſt the plunder of a province was daily ſquandered upon a demirep of faſhion, or an effeminate ſinger.

WHILST the people became thus more enlightened, the government ſtill blindly perſiſted in its uſual waſte and exceſs. The latter part of the reign of Lewis the XVth, a period marked with profuſion and licentiouſneſs, by increaſing the public diſguſt and diſcontent to a ſtill higher degree, haſtened on the cataſtrophe; the nation groaned under an accumulation of internal diſorders, the farmers-general grew exorbitantly rich on the plunder of the lower order; a general ſyſtem of cruelty, peculation, and rapine prevailed at court, and pervaded all the different ranks of the nobility; the people, given up a prey to thoſe rapacious vultures, were harraſſed, perſecuted, and ruined. Thus the fabric of the ſtate, enfeebled, exhauſted, and labouring under all the exceſs of riot, committed to the direction of a ſucceſſion of corrupt, abandoned, and ambitious miniſters, ſunk under its own enormous weight, and haſtened to its diſſolution.

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YET notwithſtanding thoſe immoderate abuſes, ſuch were the internal reſources of the nation, and ſuch their deep-rooted attachment to their King, that France might ſtill have warded off the fatal blow; had prudent and moderate meaſures taken place, had a long peace, a judicious plan of œconomy, and a gradual redreſs of public grievances been adopted; had the mad career of ambition and folly been arreſted, ſhe might ſtill hope to have ſurvived the ſhock, and prevented all the horrors of popular inſurrection; but an inſatiate rage of conqueſt, a turbulent and reſtleſs ambition, and a fatal competition with Great Britain, involved her in difficulties, which it was impoſſible to ſurmount, and which nothing ſhort of inſanity could have hurried her into; her raſh and unjuſt interference in the conteſt between England and North America, by introducing a ſpirit of diſcuſſion and political enquiry into a country already ripe for change, precipitated her fate, and brought the French Monarchy to the natural period of ultimate conſummation.

PASSING over the firſt ferments of the French Revolution, we ſhall haſten forward to the period of the people's having reaſſumed the privileges of ſovereignty, and aſſembled as a legiſlative body. On taking a diſpaſſionate view of their proceedings, we ſhall not be ſurpriſed at the ſeries of events which have happened ſince that time.

It was extremely natural that the people, finding themſelves once more in poſſeſſion of that influence to which their great ſuperiority of numbers, opulence, and information, gave them ſo juſt, ſo undoubted a title, ſhould, inſtead of confining themſelves to the local diſorders of the national finances, look up to the primary and deep-rooted ſources of injuſtice and public depravity; they found that the moſt glaring abuſes exiſted in every department, and that a general reform was indiſpenſably neceſſary; in order to effect this great work, they ſaw themſelves obliged, in conformity to the notions of conſtitutional conſiſtency, not then exploded in that country, to call in the body of the nobility to their aid. The National Aſſembly was formed, and entered with alacrity into the buſineſs of reformation, or rather regeneration: the nobility ſoon diſcovered that the demands of the people were high, that they aſſumed a tone of command, and propoſed meaſures inimical to, and ſubverſive of, their own particular privileges; they caballed, murmured, and ſhewed evident ſigns of diſaffection: the clergy too, a powerful and opulent counterpoize againſt the views of the people, perceived that an attack was meditated againſt themſelves, and immediately united in fomenting the diſcontents of the nobles; the people, who hitherto ſeemed not to have outſtepped the line of moderation, were

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now rouſed, agitated, and hurried into meaſures, which were more dictated by intemperance and animoſity, than by thoſe maxims of coolneſs, prudence, and precaution, which ſhould ever direct the deliberations of a new, and yet unorganized aſſembly; allowances may be made for the hurried and tumultuous operations of a nation, provoked by the recollection of paſt wrongs, and trembling in anxious uncertainty for the future; yet this ſeemed to have been the critical moment, on which depended the fate of France. The people had obtained a decided victory, and could at that time have erected a firm and invincible barrier againſt the future incroachments of any arbitrary King, or the exactions of an oppreſſive nobility; had they temporized for a moment, had they made an accurate calculation of their own ſtrength, and that of their opponents, they would have procraſtinated the raſh and inconſiderate ſtep of irritating two ſuch powerful parties beyond a poſſibility of reconciliation. In an evil hour, in the paroxyſm of acrimony and bitterneſs, did they tear up by the roots the inſtitutions, or the prejudices of centuries; the nobility were deprived of their rank and privileges, and excluded from the aſſembly, unleſs they conſented to ſink into the capacity of common citizens; the clergy were treated with ſtill greater ſeverity; the nobility were admitted to a ſhare in the tranſactions of

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the new legiſlative body, on the condition of laying aſide their ribbands, croſſes, and other high-ſounding inſignia of former diſtinctions, &c. their properties were ſtill ſafe and inviolate; but the poſſeſſions of the clergy were conſidered as fair and juſt plunder; the account of retaliation was exacted with ſeverity and rigour; their landed property was ſeized upon, confiſcated, and expoſed to public ſale: this violent and impetuous ſtep, in one moment, decided the balance againſt the cauſe of the people, inaſmuch as it detached for ever from their party the two great and leading intereſts, on whoſe coalition, in the general cauſe of freedom, depended, in a great meaſure, the ſteadineſs and ſecurity of the new revolution.

It is but juſt to mention here, that from very high authorities opinions are diſſeminated, that to ſtop one iota ſhort of a total abolition, or annihilation, of king, nobility, and all other diſtinctions of rank, would be doing nothing; that the natural equality of man precluded every other idea of reconciliation, except on the principle of referring all back to the original ſocial compact, the virtuous aggregate of the people; that every thing, hitherto known in government, was wrong, and that the whole ſhould be founded on a new and infallible baſis.

For the preſent, we ſhall not contend the principle of this doctrine, we are even willing to admit,

mit, that it is more reaſonable that the few ſhould lie at the mercy of the many, however incompetent the latter may be to decide on the nature of treaſon againſt the majeſty of the people, and however ſummary and dreadful in their modes of inflicting puniſhments, than that a whole community ſhould be ſacrificed for the intereſts and ambition of a few; but it muſt not hence follow, that all modes, all meaſures of moderation ſhould be laid aſide, on the bare hope of a perfect and infallible ſyſtem of government, which ſtill exiſted only in theory; the living example of a virtuous repreſentation in North America might be conſidered as a ſufficient precedent for the French nation; but we ſhall hereafter ſhew that the ſimilarity is not juſt, that the virtuous and undebauched Pennſylvanian may be capable of a degree of patriotiſm and forbearance, which will badly apply, and which we ſhall ſcarce allow to the giddy and voluptuous Pariſian; though I ſhould not wiſh to go ſo far as the French Apoſtle, John J. Rouſſeau, who ſaid, that that nation wanted ſtill a century of that maturity, which would render them fit to receive the bleſſings of a free government, I ſhall not heſitate to ſay, that two national characters can ſcarcely be more ſtrongly contraſted than France and North America; but however ripe they may be for this advantage, no reaſonable motive can be hence adduced for their having

having thus laid an infallible foundation for diſcord, tumult, and anarchy: it was raſh, violent, and unprecedented, and brought on all that train of evils which have ſince followed.

HAD a people, actuated by reſentment, and heated with enthuſiaſm, been capable of calm and diſpaſſionate reflection, they would have perceived that when the army had declared in their favour, the only enemies they had to fear and conciliate were the nobility and clergy; the king, without the ſupport of theſe bodies, was totally diſarmed, and lay at their mercy; his nails being pared, and his teeth drawn, they might have modelled him, poor good man! as they pleaſed; then they had only to reconcile them, ſo as to prevent their uniting againſt the common cauſe; they might have been amuſed; their own immediate intereſts would have induced them to have yielded to the temper and the neceſſity of the times, and joined the people, in the hope of taking advantage of future contingencies for the recovery of what they now gave up: but the apparent neceſſity of a great and juſt national reform marred this fair proſpect of conciliation; the new aſſembly was ſo intent on this grand contour, and ſo anxious for its complexion, that they laid aſide all calculations and rules of proportion; by ſhaking off at once, and detaching from their cauſe, the influence of the nobility and clergy, the only weight which could

poſſibly preponderate againſt them, they not only loſt their ſupport, but forced them at the ſame time to form a firm and decided coalition againſt the people, which, though not able to deprive the new aſſembly openly of the high authority they were now poſſeſſed of, did not want means of raiſing factions and cabals amongſt its members, of agitating, dividing, and diſtracting their councils, and ſpreading diſcord and alarm through the whole nation.

This plan of corruption ſucceeded but too well; the aſſembly, after having marked out the great outlines of a new Conſtitution, and formed a code of laws for the future government of France, ſeemed to relax of its vigour; as if exhauſted with the toils of ſo great a work, the legiſlators of a great empire ſunk ſuddenly into all that feebleneſs and puerility which mark the meetings of a trifling corporation, or the reſolutions of an obſcure club; the manly ſpirit of Mirabeau was fled, and no longer animated their proceedings; the criſis was paſt, and the collapſe which ſucceeded ſeemed to bear a juſt proportion to the previous vaſt excitement, and ſtrong reaction of the *vis medicatrix* of the ſtate; order was laid aſide from that moment, and the community, no longer reſtrained by the authority of the aſſembly, or the execution of the laws, ruſhed into diſorder; drenched in the intoxicating draught of liberty and equality, to

which

which they had been ſo long unaccuſtomed, they plunged into all the exceſſes of riot and licentiouſneſs, and have left anew to their poſterity and to all mankind a dreadful example, that the moſt civilized and poliſhed nations, when ſet looſe from the reſtraint of law and the ties of public order, can become more ſavage than brutes, and more fell than wolves or famiſhed tygers.

THUS far have we purſued this painful ſubject, thus far traced out the pre-diſpoſing cauſes which led to the French revolution, as alſo that unerring line by which ambition and the luſt of arbitrary power tend to their own deſtruction; but thus far have we had the light of facts to guide our ſteps; that which is to follow is all ſuſpenſe and uncertainty; what may hereafter be the fate of France, and what her mode of government, are queſtions too momentous to be decided haſtily.

THE object of framing a code of legiſlation for a great and powerful country, upon principles new and hitherto undefined, is an experiment of the moſt vaſt magnitude, as including not only the peace and ſecurity of the preſent race, but alſo the happineſs of future generations: the adoption of a falſe principle in a point ſo eſſential to ſociety, may be attended with conſequences dreadful beyond calculation; the ſuſpenſe and difficulty which partiality, timidity, and the local prejudices of the human mind oppoſe againſt forming fixed and decided

cided opinions upon a ſubject ſo obſcure, ſo unexplored, muſt terrify the modeſt and unaſſuming, and ſhould deter even the moſt intrepid innovator: but, thanks to the productive genius of our age, the miſts of ignorance are diſperſed, and no longer obſcure our horizon. Mr. Paine, the modern Merlin, has broken the inchantment which had ſo long blinded mankind; he waves his wand, and behold! all the artificial phantoms of romance diſappear from our eyes.

Scarce had his Rights of Man been publiſhed, when that childiſh mockery which diſtinguiſhed man from man vaniſhed like ſmoak; "the cloud-"capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the ſolemn "temples, &c. diſſolved away, and left not a "wreck behind."

The beautiful climax of Shakeſpeare conveys a ſublime leſſon of morality, and impreſſes the mind with humility and awe: his magical deſcription excludes all idea of ſorcery, or of that black art which he ſo happily introduces in his Macbeth, and which was invented with a view to deceive and betray; but as bold imagery and brilliant colouring appertain more properly to the regions of fiction, we ſhall abandon them for the more humble and uſeful walk of common reaſon, and proceed to examine whether there may not be ſome deception, ſome ſtage-trick in the mode of preſenting this magic lanthorn.

Some

Some men have poſſeſſed the happy knack of diſguiſing objects with ſuch a degree of ingenuity as not only to miſlead the multitude, but even impoſe on the moſt cautious and enlightened. The treatiſe written by the ingenious Berkley, in anſwer to Materialiſts, carried him ſo far beyond his original intention, that he at length, by a regular chain of reaſoning, found himſelf obliged not only to deny the exiſtence of matter, but tō aſſert, that it was an abſurdity to believe it could poſſibly exiſt; and this opinion he perſiſted in to his death; though his doctrine remains unrefuted, his orthodoxy was never called in queſtion, and his memory ſhall be ever revered as that of a man not leſs diſtinguiſhed for talents than exemplary piety and virtue; his Metaphyſical Theory excited the aſtoniſhment of the learned, but could extend no farther, as with all his ingenuity and ſtrength of argument, he could never prevail upon men of common underſtanding to believe ſuch an incomprehenſible paradox, as that neither the ſun, moon, nor ſtars, nor any other part of the viſible creation, did or could exiſt, otherwiſe than in the minds of ſenſible beings; his ideal or intellectual world could have no effect on the peace or harmony of a material ſyſtem, and was therefore ſuffered to paſs uncenſured by beings of fleſh and blood; but had he lived at the cloſe of the 18th century, and taught that all the ſocial eſtabliſh-

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ments of the world were vicious and corrupt, not becauſe all human inſtitutions are liable to become ſo, but becauſe they did not ariſe out of the people; that all reforms of government, all redreſs of grievances would be ever partial and inadequate, until referred to the elementary aſſemblies of the whole maſs of the people, who were to be made not only judges but executioners, I queſtion much whether his writings would have given him a claim to the gratitude of poſterity; no, his benevolent mind would have ſhrunk back on itſelf, and ſtartled at the deſtructive tendency of doctrines, which muſt have entailed upon his memory the execration of mankind and the curſes of generations yet unborn.

The doctrines of a humane and rational philoſophy ſhould, at the preſent alarming criſis, point out ſome moderate mode of appeaſing the fermentation which agitates the minds of the public throughout Europe, and not add fuel to the flame; could the dangrous extremes of violence and timidity be avoided, and the animoſity of contending and contradictory opinions be ſuſpended, the moſt ſtriking advantages in favour of civil and political freedom may be hoped from the complexion of the preſent times: but how can ſteady and permanent plans of government be adopted in the moments of tumult and public phrenzy? if diſorder be the natural conſequence of raſh and precipitate

precipitate reſolutions in the common courſe of private life, how much more inevitably muſt it reſult from the haſty and inconſiderate adoption of metaphyſical ſyſtems in the management of public tranſactions, where the combinations are infinitely more complex, the juſt relation and harmony of the parts more obſcure and difficult to be ſeized, and where one original error may deſcend to the moſt remote poſterity?

THOUGH by no means willing to admit the opinion of Monteſquieu, with regard to the actuating principle of a monarchy, which he calls honour, and which I would call ariſtocratical influence, yet I cannot but think the principle he lays down for the ſupport of a republic more juſt, as founded on reaſon and experience: when he calls this principle virtue, he muſt certainly mean not the moral rectitude of individuals, but the public virtue of the people taken collectively, in whoſe hands is lodged the ſovereign authority: in this form of government it is neceſſary that this juſtice, or rather political rectitude, ſhould exiſt in the great majority; that it be ſteady, uniform, and incorruptible, in order to ſecure permanency to the ſtate; the perfection of this political rectitude does not ſo much depend upon the good intentions, or honeſty, of the miniſters or officers of the ſtate, as upon that point of information, or knowledge, which enables the people at

large to aſcertain the limits, extent, and nature of their government, and their unanimous co-operation in its ſupport: if then the ſuperior excellence of a republic depends upon the virtue of the majority, and that this virtue conſiſts more in their political information than their moral honeſty, the education of ſuch a people ſhould be like that of Sparta; they ſhould have no ſchools but military and political ones: neither huſbandmen nor artizans can make any part of a ſimilar ſyſtem; the occupations of labour preclude that information, which is indiſpenſably neceſſary for him who would make himſelf acquainted with ſocial inſtitutions, and the abuſes to which all governments, from the mutability of circumſtances, are liable: hence, where agriculture and the arts of induſtry are cultivated on a large ſcale, the governments, though known by the name of republics, were not virtually ſuch; ſuch have all occaſionally changed into the mixed form, and were frequently obliged to become deſpotic for the purpoſe of ſelf-preſervation.

Could men be preſerved uniformly virtuous and faithful to the public truſt, were they proof againſt the temptations of opulence, voluptuouſneſs, and luxury; were they not liable to the ſeductions of ambition, and the thirſt of power, we ſhould no longer need to diſpute about terms, as in that ſuppoſition all modes of government would be

be equally good, equally conducive to the proſperity and happineſs of the community; had the ſucceſſive miniſters of the three laſt kings of France, although the immediate ſervants and inſtruments of the Crown, and not delegated by the people, been actuated by a ſenſe of public virtue and diſtributive juſtice, their country would never have experienced thoſe diſorders, which brought on the preſent revolution. Government is the conſtitution of a public force, which repreſents the nation, and was originally intended for its protection and ſecurity; when this public force, either by the ambition of the ſovereign, or any other reaſon, deviates from its primary end, and becomes oppreſſive to the people, it then is no longer government, it is uſurpation. Could we produce any inſtance of civil ſociety, which had exiſted for any time without being expoſed to the attacks of ambition from abroad, and the incurſions of foreign invaders, it might be eſtabliſhed as a rule, that the quantum of this public force ſhould be limited exactly in ſuch a proportion as not to exceed the internal exigencies of the ſtate; the enforcement of the laws, the preſervation of a juſt and ſteady police, and the ſecurity of the citizen, would be fully ſufficient, and is, indeed, all that is eſſential to the proſperity of a people. Unhappily for the cauſe of humanity, we can ſcarce point out a ſingle example of ſocial eſta-

bliſhments being preſerved long in a ſtate of moderation and juſtice. Public virtue may prevail in obſcure and infant ſocieties; but opulence and power beget ambition; and a deſire of conqueſt ſeems invariably to have marked the ſteps of all nations, as they emerged from obſcurity, and advanced to a ſtate of luxury and refinement.

It may be granted, that a republican government ſhould be the moſt perfect and equitable, inaſmuch as it implies a high degree of incorruptibility in all the individuals, which compoſe the community; and, at the preſent moment, it may be thought unjuſt to deny the poſſibility of forming a perfect one; but as men can reaſon only from what they know, every wiſe man will be cautious of admitting as truths, aſſertions not ſupported by experience, or opinions not reconcileable to probability, or the uniform tenour of human experience.

The republics of Greece, whilſt in a ſtate of poverty, preſerved that virtue, which was ſo eſſential to their conſtitution; but when that virtue was ſapped by the progreſſive increaſe of luxury and wealth, they were ſhaken by factions, and became an eaſy prey to the ambitious Philip: had the republic of Carthage not excited the jealouſy of Rome, by an oſtentatious diſplay of her power and riches, ſhe might never have fallen; even Rome, imperial Rome, the firſt of all republics,

muſt have changed her government long before the uſurpations of Marius, Sylla, and Cæſar, had not her active ſons been employed in the conqueſt of the world; worn out with diſcords, ſhe ſcarce had breathed from her fatigues, when overwhelmed with the plunder of the world, ſhe ſunk into ſlavery.

The puny republics of modern times ſcarcely deſerve the name, having all degenerated ſoon into the moſt abſolute and tyrannical ariſtocracies.

As to the new republic, or federal union of North America, it cannot yet be conſidered to have perfectly paſſed the period of its infancy, and at the ſame time that we applaud the wiſdom and conſiſtency of its councils, we think ourſelves perfectly excuſable in not admitting it as a precedent, until half a century ſhall have paſſed; the people, ſcarce recovered from the embarraſments of an expenſive and deſtructive war, and educated in the habits of temperance and moderation, are as yet conſiderably diſtant from that period, when opulence, luxury, and power ſhall threaten danger to their government.

Have we not then reaſon to ſuſpect that this virtue of republics is more ſpeculative than real? No government can ſurely be exceptionable, except from the difficulty of preſerving the ruling powers within the line of public duty; but this difficulty ſeems equally great in a republic as in any other form

form of government, whereas there can be no other ſecurity for its ſtability but the virtue of the people; if they be equally liable to corruption, bribery and influence, how can this government be more permanent than any other? and though they ſhould remain virtuous, their rulers may become ambitious; and are not the people then equally, as in all other governments, obliged to have recourſe to force and inſurrection, in order to wreſt this unconſtitutional power from the hands of the uſurping few.

With every wiſh for the happineſs and ſecurity of the people, I do not ſee how Mr. Paine's reaſoning can amount to a proof that the people, in the repreſentative ſyſtem, can be made more virtuous or more politically honeſt than in any other form of mixed government, or that any ſecurity can be given that they will uſe their authority of calling back, at their pleaſure or perhaps whim, the purity of the popular conſtitution with moderation and juſtice? this can be hoped only on the idea of their being (collectively conſidered) competent not only to judge of the neceſſity of a reform, but alſo ſufficiently moderate to avoid in the experiment thoſe exceſſes and diſorders which are almoſt always more than a counter-balance for any ideal advantages which may accrue from ſuch reform. Without preſuming to be an apologiſt for the abuſe of power, it

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is but conſiſtent with reaſon and experience to believe, that it is unſafe, that it is unwiſe to entruſt to the people at large ſuch an extra-balance of power as to enable them to continually diſturb, according to their unſettled and unprincipled notions of reform, the regular diſtribution of juſtice, the eſtabliſhments of police, and the ſteady operations of a fixed government.

At the ſame time that I agree with Mr. Paine on the exiſtence of abuſes, and that reform may be neceſſary, I think him too reaſonable a man to refuſe me the right of calling in queſtion the infallibility of the multitude, in deciding on the expediency of ſuch reform upon every trivial or local diſcontent, which may ariſe from the malice or diſappointed ambition of a turbulent individual, or the popularity of an artful and ſeditious citizen. High an opinion as I entertain of the Rights of Man, I cannot aſſent to give it ſuch an unlimited ſcope as to believe that the *vox populi* is in every inſtance the *vox Dei:* I know that the moſt enlightened philoſopher may be miſtaken as to the moment in which it may be excuſable to ſubſtitute anarchy for fixed order on the idea of a correction of abuſes. I conceive there ſhould be a limit to the authority of any claſs of men, however moderate and juſt; but this limit would appear to require a more ſtrict and determined outline, when the "maſs of mankind," inſtead "of being degradedly

"thrown

" thrown into the back ground of the human " picture," are to be " brought forward with " greater glare as the puppet-ſhews of ſtate" and *public reformers*; and that this outline ſhould extend not only to the outrages which have been " the effect of the abuſes of the revolution," but alſo to " the degraded mind which exiſted before " the revolution," and which may poſſibly exiſt and even acquire new force long after it ſhall have been effected.

All governments require an actual and effective force, which is conſtituted for the public ſafety; this force muſt be ſteady and uniform in order to inſure the execution of the laws, and the diſtribution of juſtice. Mr. P— would ſurely not mean to inſinuate, that this force ſhould, or could remain at the direction of the people at large; dignified as his notions are of the people, I ſuſpect he would not confide ſuch a dangerous weapon in the hands of the many-headed monſter, the *profanum vulgus* of that pleaſant ariſtocrate Horace; he means, it muſt be entruſted to their repreſentatives; and who are to be thoſe repreſentatives? virtuous, diſintereſted citizens, no doubt, who are not liable to the corruptibility and weakneſſes of a degenerate race of ariſtocrates: it imports little to mankind whether their oppreſſors be adorned with blue ribbons, or ſtrut in all the pantomine virtue of a Sans Culotte: however, we

may

may be allowed to obſerve, that the former, notwithſtanding the unqualified ridicule and abuſe thrown upon hereditary diſtinctions, not only ſhould be, but confeſſedly are, from conſtitution, temper of mind, and habits of education, more mild, more humane, and more competent to the duties of government, than the latter. I would not aſſert that private citizens are not as well qualified by nature to govern as Lords, or Dukes, when the advantages of education are equal; but am inclined to think, that the latter would be equally, or perhaps, more diſpoſed to abuſe a power to which they were unaccuſtomed, and as uniformly anxious for a monopoly of loaves and fiſhes as the former.

Why then this intemperate and unphiloſophical abuſe of men, inveſted with power, or public dignity? have they not ever, either from the impoſſibility of eſcaping ſo great a trial, or from the malice of diſappointed competition and jealouſy, been expoſed to the ſcurrilities of the outs, and the indignation of the mob? and yet high office, with all its dangerous and ſeducing appendages, muſt be given away, by the virtuous many, to the corrupt few; ſuch has been, at leaſt hitherto, the fate of all civil eſtabliſhments, and ſuch I dread, and at the ſame time lament, muſt be the ſyſtem of all governments, until that happy golden age

returns, when mankind at large ſhall become more enlightened and virtuous, and until ſome more permanent ſecurity can be obtained, that men will not be debauched by power, and that luxury will not be deſtructive to public virtue.

As opinions are not only free, but involuntary (for we cannot refuſe our aſſent to truth, when it ſtrikes us as ſuch), I hope my differing with Mr. P—e, in ſome parts of his reaſonings and concluſions, may be conſidered as the mere effect of our different modes of thinking, and of ſome objects appearing to me in a point of view ſomewhat diſtinct from his: it would be, indeed, a proof of extreme eccentricity, or obſtinacy, not to agree with him in many eſſential circumſtances; it ſeems, however, to be lamented, that that ingenious and nervous writer ſhould, from an honeſt, and, as I think, an amiable indignation for the miſeries of mankind, have been hurried beyond that preciſe point of moderation, which conſtitutes in great part the conſiſtency and dignity of philoſophical reaſoning; for though ſatire may be a cauſtic, neceſſary for the extirpation of inveterate and deep-rooted diſeaſes, yet that degree of temper and candour, which inſpires conviction, and gives an additional force, even to truth itſelf, ſhould be preſerved: the language of paſſion is ſeldom that of reaſon, or, at leaſt, is always to be ſuſpected.

Mr. P—e has diſcovered in Mr. Burke's Pamphlet on the Revolution in France ſome "theatrical exaggerations," and certainly had his own reaſons in diſſenting from the political opinions of that celebrated ſenator; but, however his ſtile and mode of thinking may differ from that of Mr. Burke, impartial men will not be much diſpoſed to judge, from what has hitherto happened, that the latter has been much miſtaken in his prognoſtic of that revolution. Truth may be conveyed through a variety and diſtinct modes of language; but it has been always conſidered, as an illuſtration, to have it preſented in a figurative and ornamental dreſs; every gentleman has his peculiar ſtile, and it would be not only unjuſt, but a violation of taſte, to refuſe our aſſent to facts, becauſe not conveyed in the plain garb of vernacular writing; however the author of the *ſublime and beautiful* may be deficient in compoſition and imagery, it is unfortunately true, that he foreſaw, more clearly, the events, which ſucceeded the French Revolution, than Mr. Paine did, when he ſaid, (Rights of Man, p. 38.) "Never were more pains taken to inſtruct and "enlighten mankind, and to make them ſee that "their intereſt conſiſted in their virtue, and not "in their revenge, than has been diſplayed in the "revolution of France."

WHAT has ſince become of their virtue, and what have been the humane effects of their revenge? Is this "poetical liberty, ſtage effect, dramatic "machinery, or a tale accommodated to the paſ- "ſions and prejudices of Mr. Burke?" or is this Mr. P——'s "ſober ſtile of hiſtory, or the in- "tention of it?" It would not leſſen his repute and conſiſtency to have paid more attention to the force of his own words, when he ſays, (page 42) "that prudent men readily recollect, that miſ- "chief is more eaſily begun than ended."

After having followed Mr. Burke "through a "pathleſs wilderneſs of rhapſodies," Mr. P—— goes on, (page 47) "if Mr. Burke means to "admit that man has rights, the queſtion then "will be, what are thoſe rights, and how came "man by them originally?" Is it not a groſs in- juſtice and calumny to ſuppoſe, that Mr. Burke, a man diſtinguiſhed early in life for a liberal edu- cation, cultivated taſte and tranſcendant qualities, and who has been for many years conſidered, in the firſt and moſt diſtinguiſhed ſenate of ancient or modern times, as the ſteady protector and champion of the rights of his fellow-citizens, and indeed of thoſe of mankind, could be ignorant that man has rights, &c.? Difficult as it may be to follow Mr. P—— through the "pathleſs wilder- "neſs" of tracing man up to his creation, in order to find man's rights, the journey, though long,

long, may not be totally unprofitable. He goes on, " the error of thoſe who reaſon by precedents, " (and what other ſtandard have we for reaſon- " ing?") [This parentheſis is whimſically inconſiſtent for a writer who admits no precedent but that of the Antediluvians.] " drawn from an- " tiquity, reſpecting the Rights of Man, is, that " they do not go far enough into antiquity, they " do not go the whole way, they ſtop in ſome of " the intermediate ſtages of a hundred or a thou- " ſand years, and produce what was then done " as a rule for the preſent day; this is no autho- " rity at all."——

WHO would be ſo void of curioſity as not to go the whole way, provided he could ever hope to find his way back? Thus Mr. P—— deprives us at one blow of all that may derived from an experience within the regions of probability, and refers us to a period, from whence all impartial writers and ſound critics agree, that we could have no documents or authorities, though engraven on marble or braſs, ſufficient to lead men to conſiſtent or reaſonable belief, and from the acknowledged annals of hiſtory and letters, would plunge us into all the fictions of romance, and the dreams of remote antiquity; his unbounded imagination, not content within the narrow range of hiſtorical or traditional knowledge, ſoars far beyond the rational horizon of credibility, and

traces

traces man up " to the hand of his Maker, to " the divine origin of the Rights of Man at his " creation;" and thus, after boldly overleaping the ſucceſſive ruins of all human monuments and inſtitutions, tell us, " here our enquiries find a " reſting place, and our reaſon finds a home," (page 48.) He follows up the geneaſogy of Chriſt to Adam, though " he means not to touch upon " any ſectarian principle of religion," and then aſks, " what was man then?" His anſwer is " Man." We need no ghoſt to tell us this. " Man was his high and only title, and a higher " cannot be given him." It cannot be denied, but that man muſt have been man at all times; but unfortunately for Mr. P——'s argument, the ſimple expreſſion *man* conveys only the idea of a wretched and limited animal called by ſome naturaliſts a biped, and which ſeems almoſt diſtinct from the ſame being, when the attributes of civilized, rational, virtuous, honeſt, affectionate, ſocial, are added to the generical term. The philoſopher or legiſlator does not forfeit the name of man by diſtinguiſhing himſelf from the wretched Hottentot; but his education, talents, and high cultivation mark him out as a being which ſhould not be claſſed amongſt the common herd, who can be conſidered as men only in the name and form. No, this high ſtation given to natural man is not juſt, even in Mr. Paine's opinion, but is entirely calculated

culated to throw an odium upon man in a ſtate of civilization.

Mr. Paine could not well have overturned all the diſtinctions which ſociety and cultivation make between man and man, without eſtabliſhing his principle of natural equality; but let us impartially judge from reaſon and experience: if nature made all men equal, how comes it that *the maſs of mankind* have been always ſacrificed to the intereſts and intrigues of the ingenious few? or how could ſuch a ſyſtem of oppreſſion have taken place but from their natural inequality? Had the people been ſenſible of their political rights, or able to make an eſtimate of their own ſtrength in procuring redreſs, they could not ſo uniformly through all ages have ſubmitted to be the packhorſes of a few maſters. Men are, or ſhould be, politically equal; that is to ſay, every man, who has not by his crimes forfeited his right thereto, is entitled to the protection and participated advantages of that ſociety of which he is a member. The government which ſtops ſhort of this point is unjuſt and tyrannical; ſuch a ſtate of political equality may be obtained, but government can go no farther: for no ſyſtem of laws, no revolution in a ſtate can effect or ſecure natural or moral equality amongſt mankind.

Natural talents, habits of thinking, and modes of education, eſtabliſh a total inequality, not

not only amongſt individuals, but amongſt nations. In Mr. P——'s ſyſtem of reaſoning, the civilized inhabitant of modern France can have no advantage over, nay, is inferior to an Otaheitan; the barbarous Tartar or wandering Arab has an undoubted claim to "the high and only "title of man, and *a higher cannot be given him.*" But could any man, capable of combining two ideas, compare the enlightened Thomas Paine, the apoſtle of political truth, the redreſſer of wrongs, the public advocate and champion of degraded humanity, to an ignorant Tartar? In what then conſiſts the difference? I ſay in education. Had Mr. P—— been born and educated in Tartary, he would have continued for life to bow down abjectly without remorſe or ſenſe of humiliation to the great Lama. That ſame art of reaſoning, which Mr. P—— owes to the advancement of knowledge and the improvements of civilized ſociety, forces him to acknowledge, that there exiſts indeed a wide, an unlimited inequality between civilized man and the ſame being in a ſtate of paſtoral wandering or ſavage life.

Is it conſiſtent with juſt or logical reaſoning, to paſs over all the ſolid materials of authenticated hiſtory, to overlook all thoſe brilliant epochs, when the higher exertions of the human faculties have been called forth by the progreſſion of ſocial life? Shall the ſupercilious eye of a metaphyſical

dreamer

dreamer, ſo lightly glance over the accumulated improvements of mankind, the growth of ages? Shall governments, agriculture, arts, commerce, ſcience, philoſophy, and the labours of literature be all involved in one common oblivion, in order to trace our way back undiſturbed to the regions of romance, to the ages of paſtoral life, to the virtuous and uncorrupted governments of the immediate deſcendants of Adam? Shall fiction and error be thus ſubſtituted for the records of the moſt poliſhed and enlightened nations? Or, rather, ſhall the abſurd and viſionary fables of the golden age of the poets be referred to, as a model for the governments of the inhabitants of Europe in the cloſe of the 18th century? Mr. P—— cannot but know that the *eſprits forts* of France give an equal degree of credit on theſe points to the agreeable fable of Ovid, and to the grave hiſtory of Moſes; and that the literati of the preſent age entertain the ſame doubts of the creation of Adam, as Mr. P—— does of the exiſtence of the Engliſh Conſtitution; but ſuppoſing with Mr. P——, that Moſes' account of the early ages of mankind is entitled to our belief, I do not ſee what advantage ſhall thereby accrue to the point in queſtion, nor any probability that the preſent generation, with all the abuſes, oppreſſions, and injuſtice of their governments, would be the more inclined to exchange ſituations

with their forefathers in the plains of Shinaar, notwithſtanding their exalted virtue, innocence, poverty, and ignorance, together with the ſuperior advantages of a patriarchal government.

" When I contemplate the natural dignity of " man, when I feel (for nature has not been kind " enough to me to blunt my feelings) for the " honour and happineſs of its character, I become " irritated at the attempt to govern mankind by " force and fraud, as if they were all knaves and " fools, and cannot ſcarcely avoid diſguſt at thoſe " who are thus impoſed on." (Page 55).

This benevolent effuſion, this philanthropic apoſtrophe, (which is certainly the effect of a refined education) does much honour to the feelings of Mr. P—e; yet, notwithſtanding, ſuch is the ſtrange perverſion of mankind, that I doubt much whether they are now-a-days either honeſt or virtuous enough to make an heroic ſurrender of their opulence, luxury, vicious refinements, and, in a word, of their loaves and fiſhes, in favour not only of the primitive, but of any age which has exiſted from the beginning of the world. Unhappily for Mr. P—'s feelings, and for themſelves, they have not yet attained ſuch a degree of information as to enable them to ſee the bleſſings and happineſs which would accrue from ſo diſintereſted, ſo noble a ſacrifice: in ſpite of his ſtrong reaſoning and convincing arguments, men, who have been

been educated in the vicious habits of this opulent, luxurious, and refined age, will obſtinately perſiſt in their errors, and are become incapable of diſcharging the duties of that rigid and inflexible honeſty, which is eſſential to the ſupport of either a patriarchal or republican government.

Could it be poſſible to bring back men born in theſe degenerate days to the ſimplicity and virtue of the Antediluvians, (theſe two laſt epithets can be applied only to the firſt ages, as the laſt before the flood was ſwept away from the face of the earth for their depravity and wickedneſs), we would not heſitate in adopting the repreſentative and equalizing ſyſtem of Mr. P—e; it is the ſyſtem calculated for infant ſociety, for ſhepherds, fiſhermen, and huntſmen, where the riches of the ſtate is ſcarce yet become an object of temptation, or an excitement to plunder. Any mode of government may ſafely be admitted in this ſtate of a people, even a king, dangerous as he is repreſented in theſe times of innovation; any thing except the hated name of noble, for that implies an already advanced ſtate of wealth, inequality and corruption; that is the term which now-a-days comprehends in its idea the great conſummation of injuſtice and depravity. Though, from the conviction of my own mind and peculiar mode of thinking, I find myſelf obliged to differ with Mr. P—e in ſome points, I muſt confeſs that his ideas

concerning hereditary nobility, ſuch as it is in many countries in Europe, and the influence ſo inevitably connected therewith, appear to me to merit the particular attention of wiſe governments; the entailing the honours conferred on a deſerving and diſtinguiſhed citizen, on his undeſerving and profligate poſterity, takes off that ſtimulus which excites to public virtue and acts of heroiſm, and probably has a tendency to debilitate and enervate the human mind—the privileges annexed to that high rank may become dangerous in ſome forms of government; and, in all, ariſtocratical aſcendancy ſhould be guarded againſt by ſome powerful counterpoiſe—but of this hereafter.

It ſeems rather a whimſical aſſumption of argument to ſuppoſe, that the Moſaic account of the creation "ſhould be conſidered as full to the point "of the unity or equality of man; the expreſſions "admit of no controverſy. God ſaid, let us make "man in our own image; in the image of God "created he him," (page 50). I confeſs I cannot ſee the application of the reaſoning on this point; it is only a new proof of how widely men may differ in the acceptation of the Teſtament. I cannot conceive the words of the text to imply more than the outward figure of man, as in general reſembling that of his Creator, without any reference whatſoever to government, or the phyſical, moral, or political diſtinction or inequality which may ariſe

from

from the accidental changes, or local circumſtances of ſocial eſtabliſhments. Moſes, though an inſpired writer, or, at leaſt, a great legiſlator and general, does not, by any means, ſeem to underſtand this new interpretation of Mr. P—, inaſmuch as the great prerogatives of prophet, legiſlator, general, and patriarch, were ſo inſeparably united in his own perſon, and that by ſuch a divine inalienable right of poſſeſſion, that, with all his moderation and ſanctity, he would not have parted with them on any other terms than the expreſs command of God himſelf.

Away then, at once, with this childiſh chimera of the natural equality of man, and the futile proofs by which it is ſupported. In order to vindicate ſuch a doctrine, we need not travel ſo far back as the periods of obſcurity and romance; we have only to tranſport ourſelves in idea to any part of that immenſe line which ſtretches from the mouths of the Miſſiſippi to the falls of Niagara—there we ſhall find all inequalities of rank, all diſtinction unknown, ſave that which is conferred by ſuperior bravery, knowledge, or wiſdom. The Indians are all equal and independent, and probably more ſo, than the immediate deſcendants of Adam; and, were I to ſelect an example for the imitation of civilized nations, and dare propoſe ſuch an extraordinary exchange of government and political ſituation, I would prefer the inſtitutions

of

of their tribes to thoſe of the Antediluvians. We are acquainted with the ſtrong outlines of their character: the ſingularity and ſeemingly irreconcileable oppoſition of their virtues and vices excite our aſtoniſhment and curioſity.. An unnatural and diſcordant aggregation, or amalgamation, of the moſt heroic fortitude, and the moſt horrible and ſhocking depravity, mark at the ſame time the tiſſue of their national cuſtoms and manners. How could ſuch a ſtriking, ſuch an intereſting picture have eſcaped the eye of the ever-waking, the contemplative Paine? or why need he, in ſearch of equality, or virtuous and equal governments, have ſtept over the vaſt diſtance of ſix thouſand years, whilſt, by ſtepping to the back ſettlements of his dear America, he might have pointed out the bleſſings which attend the unity and equality of man amongſt the Hurons, the Cricks, and the Four Nations? with every reſpect for his intuitive underſtanding, ſuperior talents, and irreſiſtible pen, we ſhall take the liberty of aſſerting, that in his intention of proving the unity and equality of man, from a retroſpect to ages beyond the natural ſtrength of men's faculties, and the utmoſt ſtretch of their minds, he has been moſt egregiouſly miſtaken, and that, though ſuch proofs may ſtrike conviction on the minds of the equalized and unitized Indian nations, he will find

find it a more difficult taſk to miſlead the obſtinate and perverted inhabitants of Europe.

Thus far have we endeavoured to follow Mr. P— in his proofs of the natural equality and unity of man, which, though in his ſyſtem equally incomprehenſible with the Trinity of the Godhead, we have not the ſame motives to believe, not being an article of faith; before we come to that line, whereat it became neceſſary to man to give up ſome of his natural rights in order to ſecure new ones, which aroſe from his different relation, as a ſocial being, we ſhall beg leave to be indulged in a few more ſtrictures.—" It is alſo to be obſerved, " that all the religions known in the world are " founded, ſo far as they relate to man, on the " unity of man, as being all of one degree, &c. " &c." (page 50.) We muſt here be allowed the liberty of differing with the author of the Rights of Man; for ſo far from all religions known in the world being founded on it, we can ſcarce point out one which has not been actuated by a directly oppoſite principle: all religions, ſo far as they relate to God, which is the direct inverſe of the quotation from Mr. P—, may be ſaid to conſider man on an equality, with reſpect to his duties to his Creator; but ſo far as they relate to man, which muſt either mean the relation exiſting between the prieſthood, or the power which eſtabliſhed ſuch religion, and the people for whoſe

whoſe uſe it was eſtabliſhed, or nothing; religions taken in this point of view, I ſay, far as they relate to man, have been more uniform in eſtabliſhing diſtinctions of ranks and ſubordination of ſociety, than in preſerving a purity and ſimplicity of doctrine; the clear and ſublime outline of all religion, comprehending Mr. P—'s "two plain and ſimple points, his duty to God, "and with reſpect to his neighbours, to do as "he would be done by," ſtands good in all ages and periods of time, all governments, and in all the revolutions of human tranſactions, from the days of Adam to thoſe of Lewis XVI. this is religion; but it eſtabliſhes no equality amongſt men, more than being a general precept of moral honeſty and rectitude. But all religions, far as they relate to man, or his unity, or his being of one degree, have had not only a tendency, but a direct and pointed determination to the contrary extreme of deſtroying his unity, or equality of degree. Whether in the old or new law, amongſt Pagans, or Mahometans, Chineſe, or Peruvians, the principal feature of all religions has been that of eſtabliſhing an uniform ſyſtem of ſubordination on the one ſide, and uncontrouled command on the other; they have all led, or gone ſnacks with the leaders, have all retained the loaves and fiſhes amongſt themſelves as long as they could, and when they could no longer hold an excluſive poſ-

ſeſſion,

ſeſſion, was ever ready to give up to tyrants and uſurpers a ſhare of the ſpoil, in order to ſecure ſomething when they could no longer monopolize the whole; even the religion of Chriſt, that pure religion, which, at its primitive ſource, found it inconſiſtent with the ſanctity and ſublimity of its doctrine to take any further notice of governments, than to ſay, *Date Cæſari quæ ſunt Cæſaris, Deo quæ ſunt Dei*, by degrees thought it expedient to make uſe of policy and temporal means for its own aggrandiſement. The Emperors who tolerated, or declared in favour of their religion, were flattered, canonized, and almoſt adored, and it was deemed prudent and excuſable to relax the ſeverity of the church militant, in order to eſtabliſh the aſcendancy of the church triumphant. From that period, as before, have all religions been favourable to the ſubjection of the people, to their being reconciled to the yoke of obedience; in a word, to their ſubmitting to that humiliating and degrading ſyſtem of inequality, which has progreſſively excited the indignation of all humane and enlightened writers, opened the eyes of all the nations in Europe, and at length called forth the avenging pen of the invincible and irreſiſtible Mr. P—.

Religions, conſidered in a temporal point of view, as well as governments, are ſubject to the vices and abuſes which ariſe from the mutability

and degeneracy of human inſtitutions; all have changed, and ſhall continue to change.—Man, either in an individual or univerſal point of view, in a natural, civil, or political capacity, is fluctuating, unſteady, and limited, has no general ſtandard, nor is directed by any fixed criterion of ſituation; hence, far as we can judge by the experience of the paſt, or the proſpects of the future, we muſt give up all hopes of that ſtability and immutable perfection, which can only exiſt in the firſt cauſe, and is reconcileable only to the attributes of infinite wiſdom.

We have, hitherto, followed Mr. P— through all the maze of metaphyſical uncertainty, through ſubjects abſtract, and admirably calculated to puzzle and confound even the learned, but obſcure and totally unintelligible to men, endowed with only a moderate degree of information. Diſcuſſions of this nature are favourable to the ſpecious and ingenious; but not leſs ſo to error and deception, inaſmuch as we have no fixed points to reaſon from, nor *turnpike-gates* to direct our courſe. Milton, at the breaking up of the *Convention* of Pandemonium, gives a beautiful deſcription of the vanity and unprofitableneſs of metaphyſical ſtudy, when he makes it part of the employment of the fallen ſpirits.

"Others apart ſat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reaſoned high

Of

Of Providence, fore-knowledge, will, and fate,
Fixed fate, free-will, fore-knowledge abſolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes loſt.
Of Good and evil much they argued, then
Of happineſs and final miſery,
Paſſion and apathy, and glory, and ſhame,
*Vain wiſdom all, and falſe philoſophy.*

We have at length paſſed the regions of fiction, and are fairly met upon *terra firma*; in government men can reaſon much, as they have precedents and example to guide their ſteps. Mr. P—'s firſt diſtinction is, that governments muſt have ariſen *out of* the people, or *over* the people; ſuch, he ſays, was the origin of all. Suppoſing theſe definitions accurate, we ſhall only aſk, how many of the governments ariſing out of the people have been reaſonable, juſt, or equitable? "This," Mr. Paine ſays, "is the only mode in which governments have a right to riſe, and the only principle on which they have a right to exiſt." Though we ſhould acquieſce in the truth of this propoſition, I do not ſee how mankind is likely to be benefited by the diſcovery. Many have been the governments ariſing out of the people; nations have choſen magiſtrates, governors, and kings, depoſed them at their will, or humour, and ſtill have been ſucceſſively obliged to confide the dangerous power of command to one, or a few. The unity of man, in his natural, uncivilized ſtate,

is not more distinctly marked than the unity of governments, though arising out of the people; they have had all the same views of becoming independent of the delegating body, and soon degenerated into systems of corruption. The difficulty of forming good governments does not consist so much in the choice of rulers, as in the impossibility of fixing any steady or firm barriers against the incroachments of illegal measures, or the introduction of unjust and arbitrary power: a government arising out of the people has been hitherto found inadequate to the great point of securing that degree of permanent virtue, which seems so indispensably essential to the end for which government was originally formed: then we are reduced to the alternative of either making the elective body more competent to the variety of considerations, which should direct their choice, or finding out some effectual means, either moral, or coercive, to keep the representative within the line of his public duty, and obviating that uniform tendency to corruption, which has always attended the possession of authority; and hence we are obliged to conclude, that a government arising *out of* the people must soon degenerate into that of *over* the people, unless the Convention be enlightened to such a degree as to comprehend the full and perfect idea of that constitution, which is perfectly calculated

calculated to prevent the abuſes and depravity of their government.

THERE is ſcarce a nation in Europe which had not, at ſome period of its political exiſtence, an opportunity, if not of chuſing its own government, at leaſt of eſtabliſhing ſuch a balance of the ſovereign authority in their own hands, as would effectually have prevented that extreme of injuſtice into which ſome have ſince degenerated, had they been ſufficiently informed of the means, or been able to aſcertain their own ſtrength and competency for preſerving the inviolability of their rights. Then the excellence and perfection of a government does not ſo much depend on its having originated in the choice of the people, as on the degree of political knowledge and rational cultivation, which had been previouſly extended through the whole body of the nation; and, in order to claim and protect their rights, the people muſt have become ſufficiently enlightened to aſcertain the nature of thoſe rights, and the moſt effectual means of preſerving them from violation: this is ſtrongly exemplified in the inſurrections which ſo frequently happen in Conſtantinople and Morocco, where the people, in a moment of public tumult, depoſe and deſtroy their tyrants, and then ſtupidly hold out their necks for the ſabre of a ſavage and ſanguinary barbarian, whom they call forth from his aſylum,

aſylum, in order to ſucceed to the dignity and crimes of his predeceſſors.

NATIONS, as well as individuals, are tied down to that univerſal law of nature, in conformity to which they muſt paſs certain intermediate ſtages before they arrive at a ſtate of full maturity; this maturity, in the individual, has its fixed period; in nations it depends on caſual and accidental circumſtances, it may be retarded or advanced, brought to perfection, or deſtroyed for ever, according to the various combination of ſituation and public tranſactions: the degree of this illumination of the public mind, this point of maturity of a nation, we have already preſumed to fix as the univerſal ſtandard, on which muſt ultimately depend the excellence or imperfection of a conſtitution; where a refined degree of civilization exiſts, there governments muſt inevitably become moderate, juſt, and equitable; where it exiſts not, the beſt of governments muſt ſoon deviate from their primitive intention, and degenerate into corruption and tyranny. Had the late government of France paid any attention to the rapid advancement of learning and ſcience in that country, it never would have dared to perſiſt in its injuſtice; the ſeverity of the governments of Italy has gradually yielded to, and been ſoftened by the influence of letters, which are, now-a-days, ſo univerſally cultivated in that country, and the Empire of Germany

many looks forward to, and indeed touches upon that important moment when ſome change of ſyſtem muſt take place. What theſe changes may be, we ſhall not preſume to conjecture, but, it is to be hoped, they will be dictated by that ſpirit of moderation, humanity, and juſtice, which, *though not yet fully eſtabliſhed*, cannot long fail of ſpreading its benevolent effects throughout all the nations of Europe.

It would ſeem that it requires no great ſhare of political information in the people, to be able to aſcertain their eſſential rights; but this is not really the caſe: it would ſeem that they need only be made acquainted with the ſtate-trick and juggle of deſpotic government; were that veil of myſterioufneſs and impoſture, which had hitherto concealed their operations, removed; were nations ſenſible of the pernicious tendency of the long eſtabliſhed ſyſtem of warfare, whoſe ſole end was a pretence for impoſing taxes, increaſing public debt, and plundering the people; were they to ſee the profuſion and wantonneſs which prevailed in all the departments, that ſhocking inequality, which was ſupported by extortion, and preſſing upon the labour of the induſtrious and indigent, could not have exiſted. Grievances of this nature, it muſt be confeſſed, are ſuch as may be ſuppoſed to ſtrike the attention of all perſons, whoſe faculties are not benumbed, and reaſon perverted to a degree of inſanity;

ſanity; every man of good underſtanding and feeling heart would be diſguſted to live under ſuch governments; yet ſuch is the ſtrange torpor and ſtupidity of the human character, taken collectively, that there are nations exiſting in Europe, who have, for ages, groaned under oppreſſions ſtill more ſhocking and incredible, and yet ſeem inſenſible of their wrongs, and reconciled to their miſery: the man of ſenſibility ſhrinks at this humiliating picture of his ſpecies, the philoſopher laments it; but the multitude, in all countries, are dull of conception, and are only rouſed by violent ſtimulants; but whilſt thus uninformed and ignorant, the experiment of rouſing them is no leſs uſeleſs than dangerous; their rage is ungovernable, when the reſtraint of law is once removed, and, when the ſtorm has ſubſided, they ſink into their former condition, and become the abject tools of their new maſters.

Open but the channels of public information, remove the reſtrictions of the preſs, let a more general diſtribution of knowledge be diffuſed throughout the nation; let the cultivation of letters be encouraged on a general ſcale, and then the community acquires a new faculty of feeling, and treads upon the heels of the philoſopher himſelf; this is the period at which their demands muſt be attended to, when their voice becomes the voice of juſtice and of reaſon; this is the criſis,

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when the unanimous acclamations of a free, enlightened, and, at the ſame time, a moderate and humane people, acquire an irreſiſtible force, and become tremendous to the uſurper and the tyrant.

THUS far for governments which ariſe out of, or over the people. Before the author of the Rights of Man comes to particular governments, he proceeds to define the word Conſtitution, which he conſiders as antecedent to Government; this immediately leads him to the conſideration of what is called the Engliſh Conſtitution; and he ſays, "Can Mr. Burke then produce the Engliſh Con-"ſtitution? If he cannot, we may fairly conclude, "that though it has been ſo much talked about, "no ſuch thing as a conſtitution exiſts, or ever "did exiſt, and, conſequently, that the peo-"ple have yet a conſtitution to form," (page 57. 4th edition).

THIS concluſion, though not unfair in Mr. P.'s Syſtem, is new and ſhocking to the ears of an Engliſhman; but as it is not juſt that we ſhould always reaſon from our feelings and wiſhes, let us endeavour to lay aſide that national partiality ſo common to all men, and diſpaſſionately examine into the truth of the propoſition. The whole force of this aſſertion reſts upon Mr. Burke's not being able to produce the Engliſh Conſtitution. Now, though Mr. Burke had never exiſted, the exiſtence of the Engliſh Conſtitution could not be thereby affect-

ed; but it is plain, that Mr. P. means by the word Conſtitution, " the act of the people conſti-" tuting a government." Mr. Burke's not being able to produce the Engliſh Conſtitution, can no more be conſidered as an ultimate or deciſive proof that there is no conſtitution, than that Mr. P.'s reference to the Antediluvian age can be a proof of want of virtue and example in later periods: Mr. Burke has already declared, " that the King of " Great Britain moſt certainly does not owe his " high office to any form of popular election" (p. 17. 5th edition). " That the King of Great Britain " is, at this day, King by a fixed rule of ſucceſſion, " according to the laws of his country" (p. 19). It cannot be denied, but that Mr. B. is authorized, both by the hiſtory of England, and more particularly by the Act of Settlement, Bill of Rights, &c. to bring forward theſe two aſſertions, inaſmuch as they form an eſſential point of the law of the land, ſanctioned by both Houſes of Parliament, ſupported by the hereditary example of ſucceſſive reigns, and conſidered as one of the invariable outlines of what has been hitherto called the Conſtitution of England.

Long before this idea became eſtabliſhed by law, we know it had taken root by cuſtom, uſage, or the ſuperior prevalence of public opinion. We know, that the conteſt for the ſucceſſion of the crown had, for a long ſeries, involved this country

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in all the horrors of civil war, and that the diſtinctions of a red and white roſe had been the cauſe of exterminating all the old nobility of England, and the deſcendants of thoſe intrepid and invincible barons, who had oppoſed the incroachments of the Crown, and wreſted from the hands of tyrants that immortal palladium, the Magna Charta; but this is by no means a proof that we had not a Conſtitution even then, though not ſo perfect as in latter times.

In this age of revolutions, when it is become the faſhion to ſhake off the prejudices of our ignorant forefathers, we muſt not reaſon from the disjointed and irrational materials of remote and uninformed times. Men begin to aſſume a new language, and aſſert boldly, that it is a diſgrace to common ſenſe, and a violation of reaſon, to admit ſuch ridiculous, ſuch antiquated doctrines. The revolution of France has given birth to the new opinion, that the right of ſucceſſion to Crowns is not ſo inviolable as in the days of paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance; and that the excluſive ſovereignty of the people at large ſhould be the only meaſure and ſtandard for perfect government. The ſpirit of the new philoſophy, which now prevails, inculcates that the ſucceſſion to thrones and empires does not ſo much depend on old-faſhioned ſtatutes, the jargon of law, or the aſſumed authority of precedents, as upon the

ſovereign voice of the elementary aſſembly of the nation convened, and conſtituting the perſonal ſocial compact.—The prevalence of ſuch doctrines may be found neceſſary to effect a reform in tyrannical governments, where abuſes are enormous; diſcuſſions of this nature may poſſibly be allowed in order to intimidate the prince, who has not only the power, but the will to do wrong; but in a juſt, moderate, and well-regulated government, where the prince is no leſs eminent for his juſtice, benevolence and clemency, than for the love of his people; where the public and private virtues of the man reflect a new luſtre on the dignity of the throne, the promulgation of ſuch opinions, though perfectly indifferent in themſelves, ſhould be conſidered as wanton, inflammatory, and ſeditious; no liberty of the preſs, no freedom of the people, ſhould afford a pretence for the propagation of queſtions, which can have no other end than an intention of raiſing diſcontents, and fomenting diſcord in the minds of the giddy and unthinking multitude. It would be abſurd, it would be even treaſonable to ſuppoſe that a wiſe and patriotic prince, the father of his ſubjects, ſhould believe that any claims of hereditary ſucceſſion, however eſtabliſhed by habit, opinion, or law, could be a ſanction or authority for a violation of the rights of a brave, generous, and high ſpirited people; he cannot be inſenſible, that the

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right of ſucceſſion, in this country, however ſtrongly ſecured by legal title at the revolution, can never be conſidered as totally independent of the univerſal ſenſe of the nation; and that the execution of Charles the Firſt, and the expulſion of his ſon, were not directed by precedents of law (being both contrary to law); but by the general idea of their having adopted unconſtitutional meaſures, and acted in oppoſition to what were conſidered as the fundameutal laws of the land.

It can never be forgotten that the Engliſh nation have given dreadful and terrifying proofs of their reſentment and vengeance; after ſacrificing the unhappy and more innocent father on the altar of public indignation, they expelled the ſon, and excluded his poſterity for ever from enjoying the moſt enviable, the moſt brilliant rank, which could be looked up to in Europe, or in any other country; if to reign over the moſt opulent, the moſt enlightened, and, I hope I may be allowed to ſay of my own country, the moſt free nation which is now known in the univerſe, be an object of ambition, what has not the unhappy Houſe of Stuart loſt? However great the popularity and diſtinguiſhed virtues of the preſent reigning family, humanity cannot refuſe a tear to their misfortunes, and cannot but lament that kings, no more than private perſons, can be brought to appreciate their ſituation, and know the value of thoſe bleſſings,

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which, when once loſt, are ſcarce ever to be regained. The doctrine of the indefeaſible right of kings, that they can do no wrong, that their perſons are ſacred and inviolable, may be conſidered as high-ſounding words, and pompous compliments, invented by flatterers and courtiers, in order to puff up the vanity, and gratify the pride of weak and enervate princes; as a language well adapted to the governments of tyrants, to the arbitrary reigns of the Emperors of Mexico, and the unenlightened vaſſals of the deſcendants of the Sun; but theſe terms, which in all other governments convey an idea of injuſtice and ridiculouſneſs, in that of England are not only reaſonable, but conſiſtent and wiſe.

WITHOUT the moſt poſitive certainty that the king had attempted to infringe the ſanctity of a conſtitution, in the ſupport of which he has a much more decided intereſt than any private individual can poſſibly have, it would be treaſonable to ſuppoſe that his right can be called in queſtion, being the contract of the people themſelves conſtitutionally aſſembled.

THAT his perſon ſhould be ſacred, is not only neceſſary, but indiſpenſable in the preſent form of government; whereas, conſtituting one part of the legiſlative, and the whole of the executive power, his inviolability becomes abſolutely connected with the exiſtence of the government itſelf.

THAT

That the king can do no wrong, may appear an abſurdity in terms, inaſmuch as he is a man, for man is ſurely not infallible; but if we conceive the words to mean only (as they really do) political wrong, they not only are not abſurd, but imply conſummate wiſdom; whereas they clearly aſſert, that he cannot violate that conſtitution, on which not only his right of ſucceſſion, but his other high prerogatives ultimately depend, and which all reflect conſequence, dignity, and honour back on the people, by whom and for whoſe advantage they were originally conferred. But the right of kings, the inviolability of their perſons, &c. can never be called in queſtion, whilſt their government continues mild, juſt, and rational; the king who reigns in the hearts and affections of his people needs not the effect of ſuch terms to ſupport his authority, nor the influence of force, in order to procure permanency to his ſucceſſion; the love and veneration of a happy and grateful nation is the principal ſecurity, which a wiſe and virtuous prince requires, or ſhould depend on; this tie, the tie of juſtice, reaſon, and of nature, is ſuperior to all law, and paramount to the otherwiſe unavailing authority of ſtatutes.

Mr. Burke, who is ſo perfectly acquainted with the hiſtory of his own country, cannot but confeſs, that, "though the king of Great Britain does not "owe his high office to any form of popular elec-

"tion,"

" tion," he yet holds it with the conſent and approbation of the whole nation, which comprehends the perfect idea of a tacit election, and that he could not hold it in oppoſition to the public will and univerſal opinion of his people. The hereditary right of the Houſe of Stuart to the crown of this kingdom had been conſidered for a long time as firmly eſtabliſhed, and as univerſally acknowledged, as that of any empire in Europe, and might probably have continued ſo for ever, had the princes of that family not entertained too high an opinion of the privileges of royalty; had they contained themſelves within the limits of juſtice and moderation; had they not raſhly, and in an evil hour for themſelves, outſtepped the modeſty of command, and laid ſacrilegious hands on the Britiſh palladium, they might ſtill ſway the ſceptre of England; but ſoon as the dormant ſpirit of liberty was rouſed and exaſperated by the bitterneſs of religious animoſity and political hatred, they ſoon diſcovered, by dreadful experience, that the conſent and approbation of the people was the moſt eſſential point, the moſt indiſpenſable condition on which they were to hold their " high " office"—that without this, neither example, precedent, law, or force, were ſufficient to ſupport their arbitrary meaſures, or afford a ſanction to their pretenſions to inviolability or hereditary ſucceſſion.

THUS,

THUS, in the tenure and hereditary ſucceſſion of the crown of England, muſt be ever comprehended the idea of the conſent and approbation of the community, which, though not formally, yet virtually implies the election of the people.

THE unſettled ſpirit of the times, and the preſent diſordered ſtate of a neighbouring and powerful kingdom, ſhould warn all governments againſt the adoption of ſuch meaſures as may tend to diſguſt or diſunite the people, and the people againſt thoſe ſeditious and bold innovations which intoxicate the multitude, and lead to anarchy and confuſion. This country, bleſſed with a mild government and fixed conſtitution, fully competent to a reform of any abuſes which may be conſidered as oppreſſive or grievous to the community, cannot be too vigilant in preſerving, at the preſent moment, that order which is ſo indiſpenſable to the ſecurity of the ſtate, and in preventing diſcuſſions which have a manifeſt tendency to alarm and diſtract the public. On the juſtneſs of the laws and equality of protection, depend the ſtrength and energy of the Engliſh nation, which, when united by internal concord and harmony, ſhall ever ſtand ſecure from thoſe convulſions which threaten deſtruction to their neighbours on the Continent.

IT has been already mentioned, that Mr. Burke's not being able to produce the Engliſh conſtitution, cannot be conſidered as a proof that ſuch "conſti-" tution does not, nor ever did, exiſt, and that the

 " people

" people have yet a conſtitution to form" (p. 57). Though Mr. P——'s aſſertion, " that a conſtitu- " tion is antecedent to a government," may be true on a general ſcale, yet it does not follow, that it is juſt or admiſſible in all caſes, and may not be invalidated by particular exceptions. Some governments, ariſing out of the people, have degenerated, and become tyrannical, whilſt others, ariſing over the people, or " out of conqueſt," have been meliorated, and by a ſucceſſive combination of fortunate circumſtances, and a ſeries of events favourable to the cauſe of liberty, have emerged from that ſtate of bondage and humiliation, to which the moſt civilized nations, and indeed the far greater portion of mankind ſeem to have been condemned. Amongſt the latter, it will not certainly be deemed preſumption, even by a native, to claſs the government of England. However clamorous and diſcontented an Engliſhman may be about the abuſes of his own government—however wide the ſcope which an unlimited freedom of thinking, ſpeaking, and writing may be in that country, it has been always agreed upon, and ſubſcribed to by foreigners, by all the nations of Europe, that the mixed government of Great Britain enjoyed advantages ſuperior to any political eſtabliſhment, known in the hiſtory of modern times.

MONTESQUIEU, in his Spirit of Laws, ſpeaks of it with all the warmth and predilection of an enthu-

enthuſiaſt; the only long chapter in his whole work is that which refers (indirectly indeed, for he dare not have ſpoken out) to the Engliſh Government. Rouſſeau, Voltaire, and indeed all the great luminaries of this age, looked up with a degree of peculiar veneration to the government of this country as a model for all others; an almoſt infinite number of quotations from the moſt eminent and reſpectable writers of this century may be produced in proof of this point; but we do not wiſh to inſult our intelligent reader by unneceſſary references with which we ſuppoſe him already acquainted; to ſay that it is perfect, or faultleſs, would be aſſerting what cannot be true of any government: though it be the beſt we know, it would be preſumptuous to ſay, that it is not capable of improvement; time, and the gradual advancement of political knowledge, may point out the way to future reforms.

Long before Mr. P— ſtood forth the bright champion of the rights of man, philoſophy and reaſon had raiſed their voice againſt the abuſes which prevailed in moſt of the governments of Europe. Filangieri, in his Treatiſe on Legiſlation, has not only expoſed the moſt glaring abſurdity, and deviation from the laws of juſtice and of reaſon, but has laid down rules for prudent and effectual modes of redreſs; his cautious and temperate mind, though perfectly ſen-

ſible of the injuſtice of the ſyſtem, and trembling-ly alive to the ſufferings of his fellow-creatures, does not boldly launch out into the unknown and dangerous world of unqualified regeneration: by a profound and digeſted ſtudy of human nature, he knew, that alterations, even for the better, ſhould be effected by ſlow and almoſt imperceptible gradations, that the long-eſtabliſhed inſtitutions of ſociety, however erroneous, ſhould be reſpected, and like habitual and inveterate diſeaſes be removed, not by cauſtics, or violent remedies, which may not only exaſperate the evil, but endanger the whole machine; but by the cautious and judicious uſe of a rational and graduate regimen.

THE moments of public ferment are ill calculated for wiſe and temperate reform. We know it may be aſſerted, that there could be no uſe in lopping off the rotten branches, when the diſeaſe had extended to the trunk, and threatened deſtruction to the roots; but it muſt be allowed, that, when a daring and inconſiderate hand applies the axe to the full-grown oak, which, with proper pruning, may ſtill ſurvive and flouriſh, he not only deprives himſelf of its refreſhing ſhade, and the foreſt of its greateſt ornament and pride, but leaves his poſterity no other reſource but the hope of regeneration from an acorn: he ſhould conſider the thouſand unforeſeen difficulties, the uncal-

uncalculable impediments, which may prevent its nurture, and fruſtrate its growth to a ſtate of firmneſs and maturity; he ſhould make a proper eſtimate of the chilling froſts and howling tempeſts to which it muſt inevitably be expoſed, the extremes of heat and cold, the inclemencies of ſeaſons, the viciſſitudes of atmoſphere, water, and ſoil, from which it muſt imbibe nouriſhment.

An energetic and vigorous imagination may ruſh at once with precipitancy and raſhneſs into the ultimate extreme of total innovation, from a ſtrong impulſe and irreſiſtible belief, that to ſtop ſhort of that point, would be doing nothing; but could a mind of this deſcription be capable of cool reflection, or ſubmit to the diſpaſſionate operations of reaſon, it would conſider, that though its ideas of improvement and reformation may poſſibly be attended with the moſt happy effects for a future, they muſt almoſt neceſſarily involve the preſent generation in all the evils of diſcord, war, and civil contention. Is it then reaſonable, that the preſent race ſhould be ſacrificed for the convenience of a futurity which they can never enjoy? If improvement, ſcience, and the empire of reaſon, advance to their zenith with ſuch irreſtible rapidity, why muſt the preſent, as yet imperfect people antedate and precipitate the moment? When the inhabitants of Europe ſhall become ripe for regeneration, when the idea of a free and

virtuous

virtuous ſtate of equality, and the eſtabliſhment of an *univerſal republic* ſhall be adopted and embraced in the fulneſs of time, why, in the name of reaſon, ſhould not this wiſe, this enlightened poſterity be left to provide for themſelves? From the preſent appearance of things, they ſhall certainly be better inſtructed, more capable of reforming abuſes, and more competent to decide on the nature of the governments that ſhall be beſt calculated for their happineſs and ſecurity.

THOUGH it may be confeſſed, that our governments abound with abſurdities and abuſes, yet it cannot be denied but that the growth of general knowledge and rational enquiry has, in theſe latter days, been ſuch as ſhall oblige the ruling powers to lower their tone, and relax their ſeverity—if ſuch be the ſtate of the queſtion, why, in the name of moderation, ſhould not things be permitted to arrive at their proper ſtandard, at the natural period? How far is it neceſſary that the harmony and ſecurity of the preſent times ſhould be diſturbed for the purpoſes of anticipating a criſis, which muſt ſoon eventually take place? The light, which hitherto was wont to travel from the eaſt, has now taken an inverſe direction, and approaches us from the weſt; hail to the divine refulgence from whatever quarter of the heavens it comes! But as the wretch, long immured within the walls of a ruthleſs dungeon, cannot ſupport

port the Sun, until his pupil has become accuſtomed to that degree of contraction which is neceſſary for the excluſion of too ſtrong a light, ſo the people of Europe, conſidering their hitherto ſtate of darkneſs, ſhould be allowed a reaſonable time before they ſhall become fit to admit this piercing beam. Filangieri, though an admirer of the wiſdom and excellence of the Engliſh Conſtitution, modeſtly hints at ſome abuſes exiſting therein, which, from the ſpirit of a ſerious, philoſophical, and thinking people, he believes, muſt ſoon be remedied; but he is far from denying the exiſtence of a Conſtitution in England; ſo far from denying it, he gives it a decided preference to all others of ancient or modern date.

As it is to be ſuppoſed, that ſuch a ſtrong writer as Mr. P——, who rejects the authority of hiſtory, and ſcorns all precedent, would not think it fair to reaſon from pre-conceived opinions, or common-place prejudices, we ſhall endeavour to confine ourſelves to his own principles, and meet him on the ground of impartiality. (Page 57, 4th edit.) he ſays, "and though the Engliſh Conſtitu-
"tion has been much modified, from the oppor-
"tunity of circumſtances ſince the time of Wil-
"liam the Conqueror, the country has never yet
"regenerated itſelf, and is therefore without a
"conſtitution;" that is to ſay, in conformity with Mr. P——'s ideas, that there is no other way of regenerating a conſtitution but by a free act of the

people

people at large, aſſembled for the purpoſe of chuſing a conſtitution. This *enlightened legiſlator* muſt acknowledge, that in order that the people ſhould form a wiſe, conſiſtent, and equitable conſtitution, it is not ſufficient that they ſhould barely aſſemble (and the experiment he knows to be dangerous,) it is not only neceſſary that they ſhould meet in their elementary capacity, but alſo be competent and ſufficiently enlightened to ſelect and adopt that mode of conſtitution which is beſt adapted to their ſtate, and to the happineſs and good order of the community: without this laſt condition, their meeting would only tend to confuſe and diſtract the already eſtabliſhed ſyſtem, however bad; and, inſtead of order, would only introduce confuſion and anarchy. Although the ſtrong ſenſe of conviction and principled opinion, ſo univerſally entertained by the whole nation, of the excellence of their preſent conſtitution, preclude every poſſible idea, that the people of England, in the aggregate, ſhall ever aſſemble for the purpoſe of "chooſing their own governors," "ca-"ſhiering them for miſconduct," or "framing a "government for themſelves;" and although it may be deemed dangerous or ſeditious to aſſert, that the preſent exiſting conſtitution does not for ever exclude them from exerciſing rights of which they ſtand no longer in need, yet to the actual and efficacious exerciſe of thoſe rights, at different periods, muſt be attributed the revolution itſelf, and

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the perfection of that conſtitution, which is now their glory and boaſt, and which, if preſerved inviolate, looks forward to a degree of ſtability and energy unprecedented in the hiſtory of all other governments; this aſſertion, which, far from invalidating, adds new ſtrength to the actual form of government, can be eaſily proved by a ſhort retroſpect to the annals of this kingdom.

It would be ſuperfluous to enter into the hiſtory of the riſe and formation of the Houſe of Commons—Whether the eſtabliſhment aroſe from the circumſtances of the times, from the expediency of the king's forming a counterpoiſe againſt the inſolence and high pretenſions of the nobility, or from other cauſes, is immaterial—but that ſuch a body was formed, cannot be denied—Whether their power was obtained by charter from the crown, or by their own act, imports little as to the privileges they became poſſeſſed of, or the influence they had obtained in the public deliberations—the mode of gaining this power does not change its nature when once firmly eſtabliſhed—certain it is, that they advanced in a meaſured and cautious progreſſion of authority, until they, at length, got poſſeſſion of the purſe-ſtrings of the nation: this was the great deſideratum, the important point which was to have decided for ever the fate of the people—their having obtained the excluſive power of voting the ſupplies, the great ſinew of modern governments, immediately determined the balance in their favour. This is not enough for our ar-

gument—We muſt prove that they had the power of chuſing their governors, &c. &c.

ALTHOUGH the great diſſimulation, art, and ſuperior talents of Cromwell divided the people, and prevented them from chuſing for themſelves on the Martyrdom of Charles I. yet from the ſyſtematical plan, and the pains taken by the Lord Protector, it is clear that he conſidered the people as the great engine, which only could operate in his views of uſurpation: in order to gain his point, it was neceſſary to delude them; but the trouble it coſt him, is ſtill a proof of their power; they were then indeed not ſo well acquainted with their rights as at the preſent enlightened period—divided by party zeal, and torn by faction and fanaticiſm, they became the eaſy tools of bold and ambitious leaders; blinded by prejudices, and diſtracted by the bitterneſs of religious animoſity, the *National Convention*, the then parliament, ſoon degenerated into a contemptible mob, and were ludicrouſly turned out of the Houſe of Aſſembly by thoſe very chiefs whom they had appointed to command their armies; both whigs and tories were ſilenced and overawed by thoſe troops which had been raiſed, and fought in defence of the liberties and privileges of the people. Though the nation was miſtaken in the means, and by an unfortunate concurrence of things became the ſlaves of a military tyranny, yet the object of their firſt reſiſtance to the unjuſt incroachments of the crown,

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and of their ſubſequent deliberations, was evidently that of a redreſs of grievances, and the formation of a conſtitution—this point is clear, from their having ſacrificed the unhappy Charles to their reſentment, and never ceaſing until they had changed their government from a monarchy to a common-wealth, and ſubſtituted the name of Lord Protector for that of King.

Cromwell, with all his authority, was afraid to aſſume a title ſo odious to the people, who thought they had changed the nature of their government, when they in fact had only changed the name. They did not immediately perceive that Cromwell, with a ſpecious name of Lord Protector, exerciſed a higher prerogative, and was more arbitrary than any king—however miſtaken they might have been in the mode, and however anxious the nation, torn by civil war and diſcord, might have been for peace on any terms, their acquieſcence in the vigorous, though uſurped, government of Cromwell, was only a moment of reſt, or repoſe, from the horrors of ſo calamitous a conteſt. The party which reſtored Charles II. had ſcarcely placed him on the throne, when the ſame reſtleſs ſpirit of liberty and freedom began to revive. The deſcendants of thoſe inflexible republicans, who brought Charles to the block, invariably firm to the principles of their anceſtors,

ſeeing their favourite ideas of revolution totally overſet by the reſtoration of his ſon, abandoned their country, braved all the hazards and dangers of emigration, and removed the ſtandard of liberty to the then inhoſpitable regions of North America. That country afforded an aſylum to men who preferred hardſhips, and even death, to what they conſidered a tyrannical and unjuſt government. Pennſylvania was founded (not by the laws of rapine or conqueſt), and a ſyſtem of equality eſtabliſhed, the memory of which ſhall ever continue to reflect equal honour on the moderation and juſtice of the legiſlator, and the rectitude and virtue of his colony. We may ſmile at the facetious rebuke of Charles II. to William Penn, who refuſed to take off his hat in the royal preſence, but the incident is too trifling to throw even a ſhadow of ridicule upon ſo temperate, ſo humane, and ſo dignified a character. The civil eſtabliſhment of Pennſylvania ſtands as yet unrivalled in the hiſtory of mankind. The equality of Penn's government was not a mockery or affectation—not a vain diſtinction of names, aſſumed as a maſk for licentiouſneſs, and held up as the ſignal for murder and anarchy—it abjured all appeal to the exterminating ſword, and did not proſtitute the name of public virtue to the deteſtable purpoſes of ſubverting all order, tearing aſunder

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the bands of civil organization, and ſounding the horrid alarm to death and general maſſacre. Could the preſent government of America imitate the mildneſs and juſtice of the primitive Pennſylvania —could they avoid or obviate the baneful and ever-waking influence of opulence and luxury, they may then look forward to a period of happineſs and proſperity, unknown to thoſe pompous and high-ſounding monarchies, which, whilſt they extorted the gaze and admiration, were, in fact, no more than the ſcourge and malediction of the human race.

THOUGH the number of thoſe who, at that and the ſucceeding periods, emigrated from England, was great, and would ſeem to have freed the mother country of all perſons diſcontented and ill affected to the Government of the Houſe of Stuart, yet we know it was by no means the caſe; for Charles II. had hardly paſſed the firſt effuſions of tumultuous joy and loyalty for his reſtoration, when the repreſentatives of the people began to ſhew ſome appearances of œconomy in the grant of ſupplies highly inconſiſtent with the expenditure and luxurious prodigality of that period—though the firſt proviſion for the expences of the ſtate was liberal and unprecedented, and indeed almoſt irreconcileable with that ſpirit of avarice or ſtingineſs, which had diſtinguiſhed his father's reign, ſtill the Houſe of Commons kept a watch-

watchful eye on the growing influence of the crown—the corruption of the times had not debauched them ſo far as to make them forget that they were the repreſentatives of, and the truſtees for the property of the people. They manifeſted the moſt uniform marks of diſaffection, and ſtood forth ſteadily in oppoſition to the increaſe of illegal prerogative.

On the acceſſion of James, they ſoon came to a criſis, and gave a convincing proof that they had a conſtitution, at leaſt ſo far as to ſecure their own rights of liberty and property, of taxing themſelves, of determining the public expenditure, and of expelling one king, and chuſing another in his room, &c. &c. as per Bill of Rights, &c. &c.

If theſe are not proofs of a ſolid ſtandard for a conſtitution, if the ſtrong conviction entertained by the people of the inviolability of their own privileges, and their unchangeable firmneſs in ſupporting them, be not the eſſential criterion of a conſtitution, even according to Mr. P—e, it is hard to conceive what a conſtitution means; if the ſenſe of the people had been ſufficiently unanimous and vigorous, ſo as to decide on the nature of the government, their not conforming to Mr. P—e's ideas of perfect and equalized republicaniſm, is by no means a proof of their want of power or authority; it can only amount to this, that they had not yet arrived at that ultimatum of political know-

knowledge, ſo lately come into faſhion, which conſiſts in believing, that no government can exiſt, whilſt the hitherto received diſtinctions of ſociety are ſuffered to remain; that the firſt ſtep towards regeneration, is a total abolition and oblivion of what has been heretofore known, or conſidered as example or precedent; that mankind, for the formation of a government, ſhould be reduced to their firſt elements, in which idea is included the confuſion of the original chaos of the poets: Legiſlators, heroes, philoſophers, patriots, and if we are allowed the word, divines, forming the moſt delightful jumble, and "*joſtling in the dark*," with noodles, numſculls, loggerheads, drunkards, and ideots. (This ſelection of terms, though inelegant, was preferred, on the principle, that the ſtupidity and ignorance of the mob, however humiliating to reaſon, convey a leſs ſhocking idea than that of their diſſoluteneſs, vices, and depravity.)

KINGS have been weak, and ſometimes wicked; nobles, as ſubject to the imperfections of humanity, and the temptations of their rank, may be licentious, imperious, and prodigal: but who, in the name of temperance, juſtice, or charity, could be ſo cruel as to preach up the diabolical doctrine of trampling them in the duſt at one blow, and expoſing them to a promiſcuous maſſacre from the hands of the *humane*, *benevolent*, and *enlightened* maſs of the people? If true politics be ſo inconſiſtent

ſiſtent with mercy, give me falſe politics or any politics, provided the ſyſtem be occaſionally tempered with an accidental interval of moderation, juſtice, or humanity. The language of paſſion and revenge might have been conſidered as ornamental, and not unworthy thoſe rude warriors who feaſted in the hoſpitable halls of Odin or Oſſian; but the legiſlator of his age, the advocate of freedom, whoſe higheſt ornament and end is the good of humanity, the benevolent friend of ſocial and civil life, ſhould not diſgrace his high miſſion, by deſcending to invective, calumny, and common-place abuſe.

The Houſe of Commons of England will not be allowed that ſuperior influence, which has been a conſtant check on the pretenſions of illegal and unconſtitutional power, nor the nation will not be allowed a conſtitution, becauſe they admitted a King and Houſe of Lords to form a ſhare of the government. It would be but juſt to allow them a ſufficient time to acquire that high poliſh, that elaborate acme of political perfection, which has guided the councils, and actuated the public tranſactions of the French legiſlators. The Engliſh are, perhaps, more dull, and require the ſtimulus of French example, in order to rouſe them into action; but it may be aſked, whether dullneſs or ſlowneſs may not ſometimes be a virtue. It cannot be denied but that it is, when put in oppoſition to

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overhaſte or giddineſs. It is not a ſhewy virtue, but it is a ſolid one, and more uſeful to induſtry and the arts of common life, than brilliancy, talents, or imagination. A dull man is generally prudent and cautious: nations, as well as individuals, have been characterized for conſtitutional ſuddenneſs and levity, others for ſolidity and ſeriouſneſs, and ſpeaking either individually or collectively, it muſt be admitted, that one haſty hour may undo the prudent and progreſſive labour of the longeſt life, and that the miſchief occaſioned by the intemperance of one moment may not be retrieved by the wiſdom of a ſucceſſion of ages.

It is then evident, that the Parliament of 1688, though they may not be ſtrictly called "the perſonal ſocial compact, the delegates of the nation in its original character," (pag. 58.) conſidered themſelves as its delegates in its organized character, that they had the power of effecting ſuch reform in their government as they thought beſt calculated to preſerve their rights and liberties, and that they did adopt ſuch meaſures as appeared to them the moſt effectual for that purpoſe. If they have erred in this point, it only ſhews, that "the Rights of Man were but imperfectly underſtood at the Revolution;" (pag. 14.) and yet, ſtrange as it may appear, this ſame parliament were ſo ſtrongly impreſſed with the idea of their having a government, on the principles on which

conſtitutional governments, ariſing out of ſociety (not conqueſt), are eſtabliſhed, that they adopted one of Mr. P—'s maxims as the rule of their conduct. It is whimſical, that more than a century before Mr. P— wrote, they acted as if they had *the Rights of Man* before their eyes.

" A government on the principles on which " conſtitutional governments, ariſing out of ſo- " ciety are eſtabliſhed, cannot have the right of " altering itſelf; if it had, it would be arbitrary— " it might make itſelf what it pleaſed, and when- " ever ſuch a right is ſet up, it ſhews there is no " conſtitution." Memorable words of Mr. P—, if a government, or the conſtitution which guides that government, be invariable, fixed, and unchangeable, how can it be reconciled to the following paſſages in the Rights of Man? " There " never did, there never will, nor there never can " exiſt, a parliament, or a deſcription of men, or " any generation of men in any country, poſſeſſed " of the right or the power of binding and con- " trouling poſterity to the end of time," &c. " Every age and generation muſt be as free to act " for itſelf *in all caſes*, as the ages and generati- " ons which preceded it." (Page 11.)

The arguments contained in this and the ſucceeding pages, down to page 17, are ſo ſtrongly put, and ſo forcibly pointed, that it ſeems almoſt impoſſible not to aſſent to them. Every virtuous

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man feels an honeſt exultation at the thought, that the abuſes and injuſtice of former periods cannot, by any right of ſucceſſion, deſcend to him, or be tranſmitted to his poſterity; and hopes, that the empire of juſtice and reaſon ſhall at length triumph over that of error and cruelty. He contemplates with pleaſure the approach of that happy moment, when a wiſe, enlightened, and liberal government ſhall do away thoſe abuſes, which aroſe from the ignorance, acrimony, and barbarity of remote periods. He looks forward with anxiety to that day, when diſcord and diſunion ſhall be no more—when the ſubjects of the Britiſh empire, from an equal participation of the bleſſings of a juſt and equitable conſtitution, ſhall, by their freedom, become unequalled, and, by their union, invincible.

But how ſhall he be ſtaggered—how confuſed, when he comes to the 59th page of the *Rights of Man?* "A Government, on the principles on "which conſtitutional governments," &c. How can he reconcile this propoſition with Mr. P—'s former doctrine? Can it be allowed then, that all governments, or conſtitutions of governments, ariſing out of ſociety, cannot admit of change? Such an opinion could have ariſen only from an overheated brain, or an enthuſiaſtic and illuſory preconception in favour of the perfection and infallibility of ſociety aſſembled in the capacity of the perſonal ſocial compact. In what period of time, or in what favoured country has this immutable convention been aſ-

ſembled? or how came they poſſeſſed of the foreſight of Angels, or the attributes of Divine Wiſdom? Which are the wiſe codes, or the incorruptible ſyſtems of government, that have ariſen from the hands of the multitude? Alas! The moſt enthuſiaſtic advocates for the legiſlative wiſdom of the people muſt confeſs, that codes of law and ſyſtems of government, ſuch as they are, have been formed only by the enlightened few; few ſoils are favourable to the growth of legiſlators, and a Confucius, a Solon, a Lycurgus, a William Penn, or a Thomas Paine, are as rare phenomena as a Homer, a Virgil, a Milton, or a *Therſites*.

A government ariſing out of the people cannot be ſuppoſed more perfect or unexceptionable, than one ariſing from any other ſource, nor can lay claim to a greater degree of ſteadineſs or infallibility. As ſocieties are ſubject to all the gradations of light and ſhade, which mark a people in their progreſs from barbarous ignorance to the higheſt ſtate of refinement and civilization, ſo are the governments which may be formed; and hence no ſtandard can be fixed for their excellence or perfection, more than the ſtate of literature and general improvements of the people; it matters little whence they have ariſen, provided they have attained a degree of virtue and vigour, ſufficient to ſecure to the community their civil and political privileges, and extend to every individual of the ſtate an equitable and undiſtinguiſhed protection.

An equal diſtribution of property muſt inevitably take place in every rich and powerful ſtate, and hence an inequality of condition and influence—this no government can prevent; but if neither title, opulence nor rank can procure exemption from the laws, or confer upon one claſs immunities or excluſive privileges, injurious or oppreſſive to the ſubordinate ranks of the community, then it may be ſaid, that the government is juſt, and that there is no inequality but ſuch as muſt be referred to other cauſes than the government.

"The Engliſh Parliament of 1688 did a cer-
"tain thing, which for themſelves and their con-
"ſtituents they had a right to do, and which it
"appeared right ſhould be done; but in addition
"to the right which they poſſeſſed by delegation,
"*they ſet up another right by aſſumption*, that of
"binding and controuling poſterity to the end of
"time; the caſe then divides itſelf into two parts,
"the right which they poſſeſſed by delegation, and
"the right which they ſet up by aſſumption; the
"firſt is admitted; but with reſpect to the ſecond,"
(page 10.) Mr. P— replies in a ſeries of fortunately ludicrous arguments, which all tend to ſhew, that no period, no government can or ought to aſſume the power of tying down their poſterity, &c, &c. Now on the idea, that it is not impoſſible to invalidate Mr, P—'s principle, we may anſwer and ſay,

ſay, that in order to determine whether the act of any government ſhould or could tie down a future generation, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould divide the propoſition into two parts, namely, into good and bad government, or a mixtnre of both. Every government which has for its chief object the ſecurity, happineſs, and proſperity of the people, and has taken the moſt effectual and wiſe means, in order to inſure its permanency, muſt be good, as all which have a contrary and oppoſite tendency muſt be bad; and governments are good or bad according as they approach to, or deviate from that common ſtandard, the happineſs of the community. This laſt is the fixed point, the great fulcrum on which reſts the eſſence of all government. It is unchangeable as truth, and immoveable as juſtice, and as an infallible touchſtone applies equally to all circumſtances and conditions of human inſtitutions. This good ſide of the queſtion cannot certainly be denied the pre-eminence of being conſidered as the moſt invaluable depoſit which can be handed down to poſterity, and the moſt ſacred gift which can be conferred on future generations. Any convention or body of men who have been ſufficiently inſtructed to aſcertain, and fortunate enough to have gained poſſeſſion of this great object, and who did not make it an inviolable and invariable rule for their deſcendants for ever, muſt be conſidered either as ideots or intereſted men, who deſerve the execration of all mankind.

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Bad governments can be ſecured by no barriers. It would be puerile to bind down future generations to an oppreſſive ſyſtem, which, as being a ſtate of injuſtice and violence, is ſubmitted to by any generation only from neceſſity and the want of adequate means of ſhaking it off. The edge of the ſword alone, or the more humiliating yoke of ignorance and ſlavery, can reduce man to ſuch a ſtate of perverſion and depravity. Extremes cannot be of long duration, and the government, which uniformly tends to corruption, muſt as infallibly tend to annihilation.

THEN we are authorized to ſuppoſe and firmly believe, that the parliament of 1688, conceiving themſelves by the Bill of Rights, Act of Settlement, &c. to have gained ſuch a decided, ſuch an undoubted ſecurity for their liberty, rights, and privileges, and their permanency, thought it incumbent on them, and a duty they owed to the cauſe of freedom, to tie down their poſterity for ever to the ſame conditions as themſelves; that is to ſay, whilſt the heirs and ſucceſſors of William and Mary, &c. &c. ſhall continue to fulfil and comply with the terms of this agreement, we and our heirs ſhall ſecure to them the ſucceſſion of the crown, &c. &c. Thus far the compact ſeemed juſt, and conformable to the nature of things—and moreover had this peculiar merit and wiſdom on the part of the people, that they held out ſuch an extraor-

extraordinary temptation as the ſucceſſion of the crown of England to the Houſe of Orange on the condition of their complying with a contract, which, at the ſame time that it was attended with ſuch high honour and dignity to themſelves, required no great ſacrifices on the part of the crown. It was virtually holding out to the Prince of Orange the moſt powerful incentive to his own intereſt and ambition. Their leaving their poſterity free to change the ſucceſſion, on any violation of the compact on the part of the crown, would imply a weak and impolitic ſuſpicion, inaſmuch as they could not prevent their deſcendants from a vindication of their own wrongs. Whilſt their tying them down conveyed a conviction that they were perfectly ſenſible of the importance of the victory obtained by the people, and that their ſucceſſors could gain nothing by a change, whilſt the terms of the original agreement continued in force, and were complied with.

Thus not only expediency and prudence, but even conſummate wiſdom was manifeſted in the Act of Settlement; the privileges of the people were ſecured, the intereſt and dignity of the crown became inſeparably connected with the conſtitutional rights of the ſubject; and this was deemed a ſufficient motive for its eſtabliſhment, as a permanent and immutable law for ſucceeding generations.

To follow up this ſubject ſomewhat more—how far is it neceſſary to good government, or the happineſs of the people, whether the head of the ſtate be called Dey, Doge, Cham, Stadtholder, King, Emperor, or Mogul? or whether the leading landholders be denominated Nobles, Ariſtocrates, Biſhops, Senators, or Gentry, provided the privileges of thoſe different ranks of ſociety do not become oppreſſive or grievous to the inferior orders of the community? In England I can forgive a man to be called a Duke or a Lord, on the idea that he cannot ſeize upon my aſs or my ox, my man-ſervant or maid-ſervant—that he cannot violently intrude into my houſe, or wantonly violate the honour of my family—that the courts of juſtice are independent, and afford every redreſs which a virtuous and reſpectable citizen can challenge from the free ſuffrage of his equals, and the unprejudiced opinion of his country—that his own houſe is his caſtle, and the *Habeas Corpus* a ſecurity for the inviolability of his perſonal liberty. But were I an inhabitant of France under the late government, or of ſome other countries on the Continent, I would have felt all the injuſtice and cruelty of a ſyſtem which was an outrage againſt humanity and teemed with abuſes no leſs ſhameful to common ſenſe, than humiliating to reaſon.

THE privileges annexed to the peerage in England cannot be deemed exorbitant, or more than correſponds with their dignity as members of the legiſlative body. A duke or lord has very little influence more than any other private gentleman of equal fortune. Parliamentary intereſt they have, no doubt; but that ſeems, at leaſt hitherto, to have been more inſeparably connected with opulence and landed property than with a title. The conſideration of this point we ſhall refer to a future period, when we ſhall endeavour to follow Mr. P—e through all the parts of the French revolution.

THE wanton attack made by that gentleman on the Engliſh conſtitution may, from the richneſs of the language, energy of ſtile, and the artful trick of preſenting to the reader only partial and imperfect views of objects, have made an impreſſion on the public; but I truſt, its effects have extended only to feeble and ſuperficial minds, who ſeldom take the trouble of examining more than the mere external ſurface of things, and form opinions more from the boldneſs and novelty of aſſertions, than from their truth or conſiſtency. It is but juſtice to confeſs, that his manner of writing is captivating, and ſome of his periods happily touched; but his reaſoning is not that of a logician or ſcholar; his principles, as haſtily taken up, are confuſed, contradictory, and often erroneous; his colouring is ſtrong and brilliant, but his outlines are unjuſt, and

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his figures frequently diſtorted and unnatural. The indignation excited by his quick ſenſe of the wrongs of the people in the late government of France, and which may be attributed in a great meaſure to the ſhameful excluſive privileges enjoyed by the nobility, has hurried him into an illiberal, unjuſt, and unwarranted abuſe of the nobility of this kingdom, in which the pooreſt peaſant enjoys as great a ſhare of the protection of the laws as the proudeſt peer in the land; in which the houſe of lords, however tenacious of the high honours and diſtinctions annexed to their rank, have neither the power nor the wiſh of infringing the laws, or violating the conſtitution.

Perfectly ſenſible that the feudal ſyſtem can never be reſtored in England, and that the people are in poſſeſſion of their juſt balance in the ſtate, all views of uſurpation, on the part of the peerage, muſt be for ever laid aſide; nor are there wanting, within the walls of that auguſt houſe, many diſtinguiſhed characters who have uniformly ſtood forth the avowed advocates and friends of the people.

The inequality of fortune and condition ſeems inevitable in large and opulent nations. The conſtant transfer and rapid circulation of property, which muſt take place in a country where agriculture, ſcience, commerce, and all the arts of induſtry and civil life have been brought to a degree of advancement hitherto unknown in any country in

the world, muſt lead ſome to a ſpirit of ſquandering and diſſipation. Unmeaſured wealth, and the inceſſant influx of riches from all parts of the earth, muſt induce thoſe habits of expence, luxury, and prodigality, which have been hitherto conſidered ſo pernicious and deſtructive, as to have cauſed the decline and fall of the greateſt nations; but there is a meaſure in all things; the luxury of the few becomes a ſource of proſperity to the whole—it is a ſpring which communicates new motion to the engine of public labour, and cal's forth all the reſources of induſtry and invention—it animates the efforts of the manufacturer, and is the greateſt ſtimulus which excites the ingenuity of the artiſt, the ſpeculation of the trader, and the enterprize of the merchant. Luxury, in a word, may be conſidered as the *primum mobile* of national exertion, and the vital principle of public proſperity.

Although the prodigality and extravagance of the French Court was one of the principal cauſes which precipitated the deſtruction of the monarchy, yet we cannot juſtly infer from thence, that the internal luxury of the kingdom was not an almoſt inexhauſtible ſource of wealth to the people. A popular and ingenious writer (Mercier, Tableau de Paris) ſays, that in the *Rue St. Honore* and its environs alone, thirty thouſand perſons were conſtantly employed for the whole year in the inventing of faſhions and dreſſing of dolls, which were

ſent to all parts of Europe as models of taſte and elegance. So far from the general ſpirit of luxury which pervaded France under the old government contributing to the revolution, it is not unreaſonable to believe, that the ſo much condemned ſyſtem of Colbert protracted the duration of the ſtate, not only by opening new channels of riches and induſtry, but alſo by giving employment to a reſtleſs and turbulent people, who, had they not been amuſed and diverted by occupation, muſt have overflowed all bounds, and ruſhed prematurely into all the extremes of diſorder and licentiouſneſs.

Hence it is, that œconomy or frugality, either in individuals or nations, muſt hold pace with, and be meaſured by relative ſituation and circumſtances. The luxury which would ruin a tradeſman, or citizen, is only an amuſement and neceſſary employment to the man of opulence; it would be ridiculous to regulate the expenditure of the lord mayor of London by the ſame ſcale as that of a corporation, where the chief magiſtrate is allowed only 200l. for his yearly appointment. By the ſame reaſons, how can the annual public expenditure of America, for example, or of any other infant or pauper ſtate be laid down as a precedent for that of England—where the multiplicity, complication, and importance of the public tranſactions, and the vaſt combination of local circumſtances, can admit no degree of compariſon or ſimi-

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larity? If the expences of a nation muſt be proportioned to its means and reſources—if they muſt be calculated according to the nature and magnitude of its internal and external engagements, how can the people of England be ſurpriſed at the diproportion? If they but conſider the extent of their trade, and the immenſe capital which is neceſſary to give it effect, the excellence and multitude of their manufactures, which have forced their way into all the ports of the univerſe, the invincible force of their fleets, and the grandeur of their navy, the various departments and public offices which it has been found neceſſary to eſtabliſh for the good order of the ſtate, the convenience of the people, and the regular diſpatch of public buſineſs, if they, I ſay, conſider theſe, along with the bleſſings they enjoy under a mild, free, and equitable government, they will not complain of paying too high a price for ſuch ineſtimable advantages.

If the prodigality of the great be conſidered as a grievance, it is one which cannot be remedied, inaſmuch as every man under this government muſt be left at liberty to hoard up or ſquander his fortune juſt as he pleaſes—it is a grievance which carries along with it its own antidote—all the treaſures diſſipated by the rich return to their primitive ſource, and are diſtributed by innumerable ſmall rills through all the ſubdiviſions of the community—they are reſtored to their elementary ſtate,

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and thus by a conſtant flux and reflux from element to aggregate, and *vice verſa*, convey to every part of the machine that life and vigour which gives action to the whole, and alone is ſufficient to conſtitute the greatneſs and proſperity of a people.

The public expences of a nation may be perhaps conſidered as an accurate ſtandard for its conſequence or inſignificance. This may not hold good in deſpotic governments; but it may with confidence be aſſerted of thoſe governments, where the people have the excluſive right of taxing themſelves; for it cannot be ſuppoſed that any people will overburthen themſelves, or lay on duties or taxes, without the proſpect of a compenſation, or the probability of ſome adequate or ſuperior advantages to accrue therefrom.

The fact is, however, that poor nations muſt be frugal, and that opulent ones may ſometimes be prodigal, in order to ſupport their ſuperiority, and ſurmount that competition to which their aſcendancy and advantages over other nations muſt ever expoſe them. The writer of this eſſay, who paſſed many years in different countries of the Continent, has often heard foreigners ſpeak with a degree of malignant exultation of the national debt of England, as a circumſtance which muſt ultimately lead to her ruin—not knowing that that very national debt has been conſidered by the moſt ingenious and

and beſt informed men as one great ſource of her proſperity and wealth. What the author's opinion may be on this point, which may ſeem ſuch a paradox to the unthinking, is not material to our preſent purpoſe; but certain it is, that the arguments in favour of the doctrine are not only plauſible, but ſeem difficult to controvert.

The views of the preſent miniſter towards the payment of this enormous ſum, together with the many wiſe regulations he has adopted in every other department of the ſtate for the conveniency and relief of the public burthen, at the ſame time that they have attracted the applauſe and admiration of foreign nations, cannot fail to ſecure to himſelf the confidence and affection of his countrymen. His coolneſs and ſkill in negociation, his avowed predilection in favour of pacific meaſures, on a ſteady perſeverance in which ſo eſſentially depend the power and aſcendancy of the Britiſh empire—his juſt and equalized ſyſtem of taxation, whoſe principal outline is to throw the preponderancy on the opulent and great, in order to relieve the wants and neceſſities of the more induſtrious order of the people—his abilities as a financier are acknowledged: the eminent ſervices he has rendered a commercial nation, by having given a mortal blow to the monſtrous abuſes of an unfair and deſtructive contraband—his candour and liberality in acknowledging the expediency and neceſſity of

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that general deſideratum—a reform in parliament, and founded his objections thereto only on the delicacy of the times, and the impropriety of diſturbing the national tranquillity, at a moment when the general ferment and ſtate of inquietude, which has for ſome time agitated and convulſed all Europe, had already excited no ſmall degree of commotion in the minds of the public. Theſe advantages, which have been procured to his country during his adminiſtration, need no comment; they ſpeak for themſelves, and plead ſtrongly in his favour before the tribunal of a juſt and generous people, who are too wiſe not to feel and know the eminent ſuperiority they at this moment enjoy above all other nations.

NEITHER the exaggerated language of faction, the invectives of party, the bitterneſs of diſappointed ambition, nor the petulance of a ſpeculative and hair-brained innovator, can perſuade an impartial and well-informed Engliſhman that he has no conſtitution, no liberty, no laws, no rights; his judgement is too well regulated to forego the ſolid advantages, which he is ſo excluſively poſſeſſed of, for the diſtempered ravings of a metaphyſical philoſophy—for that rage of experiment and revolution which ſo ſtrongly marks the preſent unhappy moment—for the precarious exchange of what may ariſe out of the aſhes of a phenix. There is a medium and outline of moderation

which muſt indipenſably qualify all revolutions, in order to prevent the exceſſes and intemperance of the deluded multitude. Sudden extremes have been ever dangerous to the peace of ſociety. From recent and dreadful experience we find, that the moſt poliſhed and accompliſhed nation in Europe, in the paroxyſm of regeneration, has become capable of the moſt ſhameful, moſt atrocious acts of barbarity, and preſents us with a catalogue of crimes that diſgrace human nature, and almoſt ſurpaſs every poſſible degree of credibility.

THE reformers of Hudibras were a whimſical, ludicrous, and rather pleaſant race of beings. The inſpirations of the ſpirit, though ſufficiently humiliating and diſguſting to reaſon, were innocent and burleſque effuſions of the human imagination; but the reformers of more modern, more enlightened times, the revolutioniſts of the moſt humane, moſt polite people on earth, are a blot to humanity, and a diſgrace to the name of man.

——— " 'Tis an unweeded garden,
" That grows to ſeed; things rank and groſs in nature
" Poſſeſs it merely."

" MUST mankind be ever the victims of reformation as well as of ambition? Muſt the immediate tranquillity of the preſent be ever ſacrificed for the theoretical freedom of generations yet unborn, without any probable ſecurity that they ſhall

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be more wiſe, more provident, or better governed than their forefathers? I would not countenance the unphiloſophical idea of interrupting the progreſſive improvement of civil eſtabliſhments; but who can avoid ſhuddering at the thought of its being effected by cruelty and murder, by wading through carnage and blood, by trampling upon the neck of the peaceable, the innocent, and the defenceleſs!

The Saracen, the Muſſulman, the Cruſader, the followers of Odin and of Mahomet were equally ſavage, and had equally for their object the extermination of the human ſpecies. Muſt we believe that man, by the ſuperior influence of a malignant being, is condemned to ſome ſpecific inſanity, which ever leads him to the deſtruction of his fellow-creatures? When tyrants, ſated with rapine and exhauſted with maſſacre, ſunk under the labour of death, and involuntarily gave the world a ſhort pauſe of ſuſpenſe—the demons of diſcord, jealous of the empire of harmony and peace, found a convenient engine in fanaticiſm and religious perſecution, and by its means plunged mankind anew into the horrors of anarchy and uproar. Centuries were inſufficient to exhauſt the fury of the conteſt; and it has been aſſerted from the beſt authority, that a hundred millions of the inhabitants of Europe alone periſhed, and were ſwallowed up in the expeditions of the Cruſades.

The period of that holy phrenzy is remote, but the depopulation of Chriſtendom did not put an end to the unnatural combat. Even at this moment, the name of Proteſtant and Catholic, of High and Low Churchman, like that of Guilph and Gibeline, or Whig and Tory, divides and ſets at variance, not only the greater part of modern nations, but even the ſubjects and brothers of the ſame ſoil. The different ideas annexed to the ſwallowing a wafer, as a peace-offering for the tranſgreſſions of all ſinners, is the ſignal for diſſention, and is held out as a pretence, that the Oath of Allegiance of an Iriſh Catholic cannot be believed ſincere, when it is at the ſame time notorious, that the whole body of that perſuaſion in Ireland have, for more than a century, deprived themſelves of all the advantages of civil and political freedom, from refuſing to take the common Oath of Qualification, which had no concern whatſoever with the political eſtabliſhment of their counry, being only a mere point of conſcientious ſcruple. Such have been the effects of that ſimple and divine religion, whoſe firſt and leading precept is peace and charity—ſuch is the abuſe of a worſhip, which holds out equally to the Proteſtant and Catholic the benevolent prayer, *Gloria in excelſis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis*; and ſuch is the infatuation and perverſion of mankind, that this bond of union, this leſſon of charity and divine

vine beneficence has been converted into an inſtrument of perſecution, a legal licence for oppreſſion, and a bone of contention calculated to keep up for ever that infamous and barbarous maxim, *divide et impera*.

The French nation has boldly, and at one craſh, torn down the pillars of both church and ſtate—the religion and government of nature they have thought amply ſufficient for the purpoſes of ſocial eſtabliſhments. Though I am ſatisfied the Engliſh government is too wiſe to follow them into the extremes of mad innovation and inconſiderate folly, yet it cannot be inconſiſtent with their dignity to borrow from them what may be applied to public utility, and to learn wiſdom from their extravagance. If to remove thoſe baneful diſtinctions which embitter all the ſweets of ſociety, and to unite the ſubjects of a great empire under the common banner of chriſtian love and indiſcriminate protection—if to blot out for ever the memory of thoſe unhappy feuds, which have divided them into factions, and were the cauſe why men of the moſt liberal principles were almoſt obliged to conſider each other with an eye of diſcontent and jealouſy—if to grant an equal participation of the advantages of an unrivalled and envied conſtitution to all deſcriptions of men, who diſcharge the duties of good citizens and loyal ſubjects, and who look up with an eye of confidence to the liberality

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of the times and the generoſity of their rulers—if to make it the intereſt as well as duty of every individual to reſpect, revere, and defend a conſtitution from the advantages he may obtain by its protection and juſtice, and not tempt him to curſe it as a partial, depraved, and abſurd ſyſtem of intrigue and monopoly—if to encourage all denominations of Chriſtians, without diſtinction of ſect, to join in the ſame cauſe of cultivating philantropy and ſocial affection, and of thanks and gratitude to that enlightened country, which united all the rights of conſcience with the only true rights of man—if, I ſay, ſome ſuch wiſe, ſome ſuch prudent plan of conciliation be not adopted, no improvement can be attempted.

This ſhould be the firſt preliminary ſtep towards reform, as without it no reform can be effectual, juſt, or permanent; the nation, which is diſunited by religious animoſity, is ever expoſed to faction, as containing within itſelf the ſeeds of diſcontent and political hatred. In a country thus circumſtanced, it would be imprudent, it would be madneſs, to agitate the already unorganized maſs of the people by innovations or reforms. Where men cannot poſſibly be brought to agree about their common intereſts—where the advantages of one party neceſſarily include the oppreſſion of others, the government cannot, without danger, relax thoſe ſprings ſo neceſſary for the preſervation of public peace and civil order.

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UNHAPPY the people who are divided amongſt themſelves, and ſtill more unhappy the government which is reduced to the neceſſity of fomenting domeſtic broils, in order to preſerve its influence—where the cauſes of acrimony and diſcontent are ſuffered to exiſt in the ſtate it becomes the ſport of every wind; the ſmalleſt ſpark excited by accidental diſguſt is ſufficient to blow up the torch of ſedition, and rouſe a flame which can be extinguiſhed only by ſhedding the blood of thouſands.

THE influence of a mild government, by ſecuring and reſpecting the rights of individuals, leads the way to population and national wealth: in order that man ſhould bring the arts of induſtry and peace to a certain degree of perfection, it is neceſſary that his labour ſhould be protected, and receive its proper recompenſe; the gradual advances from the ſimple elements of agricultural knowledge to the moſt luxurious refinements of poliſhed life are inſeparably connected with this principle; the human mind, weighed down with the ſhackles of ignorance and oppreſſion, becomes debaſed, forgets its native dignity, and, like the unproductive regions of the frozen north, languiſhes in inaction and deſpondency; but animated by the genial breath of freedom, and rouſed by the chearing voice of liberty, its faculties are expanded, its horizon enlarged, and then only it becomes capable of thoſe exertions which conſti-

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tute genius, heroiſm, and public virtue. Rome, who conquered and civilized the world, gave birth to nothing grand or truly great, when ſhe could no longer hope to regain her freedom; nor could the opulence and luxury of the whole univerſe, which, in the reign of Auguſtus, flowed into her boſom, preſerve her people from that degradation and degeneracy which are the inſeparable companions of deſpotiſm and ſlavery. In man, as well as in the inferior animal and vegetable creation, all ſeems to depend on cultivation; a juſt government is as indiſpenſable to man in his moral and intellectual capacity as moiſture is to vegetables; it is the univerſal vehicle which conveys warmth and life to the whole maſs of the nation; whilſt it protects the uſeful labours of the humble huſbandman, and excites the invention of the patient artiſt, it extends its ſalutary effects through all the higher walks of life, giving public virtue to the ſtateſman, eloquence to the patriot, and integrity to the ſenator;—it unites, combines, and condenſes the different members which compoſe the body of the ſtate into one happy, one harmonious whole.

These are only a part of the bleſſings which attend political equality and rational freedom—a nation governed on ſuch principles muſt flouriſh, whilſt thoſe governed by partial and unjuſt ſyſtems paſs away and leave no other veſtige, ſave the execrations of mankind, of their having ever exiſted.

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THE revolution of France may, and it is the wiſh of every humane and good man that it ſhould, end happily—but how long ſhall it be before that country, with all its advantages and natural reſources, ſhall be reſtored to peace, or be able to eſtabliſh a ſteady and fixed ſyſtem of government? When ſhall its fertile plains be again covered with yellow harveſts, or what compenſation can the as yet unſettled proſpect of future freedom make for the evils which have been entailed on the preſent inhabitants? In the actual moment of phrenzy every other conſideration is ſwallowed up and loſt in the idea of the new legiſlation of the people—but impartial and moderate men cannot help looking forward with anxiety and ſuſpenſe to a government which is only in embryo, whoſe elements are yet unaſcertained, and which has every thing to begin: The preſent aſpect of their affairs is confuſed; given up a prey to giddy faction and popular miſrule, their proceedings are marked by timidity and irreſolution, and the future is as yet involved in impenetrable obſcurity.

THAT order may ariſe out of anarchy, light out of darkneſs, and freedom be regenerated on the ruins of tyranny and injuſtice, is an object devoutly to be wiſhed; that France ſhould again revive from her preſent diſtracted ſtate, and be reſtored to the bleſſings of peace and good order, would be grateful to every liberal mind; but

whilſt the generous Briton heaves the ſigh of ſenſibility for the ills of humanity, and ſympathiſes in the diſtreſſes of a once great but now humiliated nation, and which had for ages contended with him the prize of glory, let him never forget, that a conſtitution eſtabliſhed by the labour of ſucceſſive ages, and ſealed with the blood of his forefathers, ſhould be ever held dear and ſacred; that whilſt the other nations of Europe groaned under the yoke of injuſtice, he alone was free; that all human inſtitutions are ſuſceptible of error and weakneſs, and muſt be ever limited within a certain diſtance from perfection; that whilſt ſlow and moderate improvements in governments can be brought about by the progreſſion of reaſon, wiſdom, and knowledge, haſty reſolutions and intemperate change are always unſafe, and threaten danger to the ſecurity of the ſtate: Let not the giddy voice of faction or party, nor the contemptible ſcribblings of diſappointed ambition

("Such men as they are never at heart's eaſe
"Whilſt they behold a greater than themſelves.")

ſhake the even temper of his mind, let him look up with a ſteady eye and generous confidence to that ſpirit of liberality and juſtice which has hitherto characteriſed the government of his country.

WILLIAM TELL, an obſcure individual, reſcued his country from the chains of a rooted and eſtabliſhed ſlavery, and who can doubt, but that many

many a village Hambden may ſtill be found in the humble poſt of honor, a private ſtation.

THUS ſecured by the invincible force of public opinion, and the vigilance of the general mind, what has the Briton to dread from the titles of rank? Away with ſuch idle dreams, the excreſcences of weak and diſordered minds; the freedom of Engliſhmen does not depend upon the impotent ravings of a tavern orator, the viſionary theories of an enthuſiaſtic revolutioniſt, nor the miſerable phantom of metaphyſical equality.—— Freedom does ſtill exiſt; and may no malignant demon, nor inauſpicious influence blaſt its fruit in that happy clime which ſeems moſt congenial to its growth—may diſcord with her infernal train never approach this hallowed ſanctuary, and may the genius of Britain inſpire her enlightened ſons to act with that ſteadineſs, vigilance, and wiſdom, which has ſtill directed their councils.

WOULD it not be unjuſt, would it not be cruel to ſuppoſe, that this general ſpirit of liberty and patriotiſm, which prevails through this favoured land, ſhould not actuate ſeveral of the diſtinguiſhed members of the legiſlative aſſembly? What is become of the Man of the People? Are his faculties benumbed, that he is no longer ſenſible to the ſtimulus of glory? Can he whom talents and integrity have placed ſo high in the eſtimation of his country, and who has extorted the applauſe of all

Europe, be ſuppoſed to nod over his duty? If corruption has contaminated, or could even approach the capitol, his intuitive ſoul muſt have loſt its wonted energy, for he aſſuredly is incapable of corruption—

" Shall he contaminate his fingers with baſe bribes,
" And ſell the mighty ſpace of his large honours,
" For ſo much traſh as may be graſped thus ☞?

Or ſhall we conclude, that Mr. Burke, becauſe his pamphlet on the French Revolution is not written with that vehemence and pathos which diſtinguiſh the *Rights of Man*, no longer feels the love of his country? The people of England are not capable of ingratitude, and certainly his paſt ſervices, a life devoted to the ſole point of oppoſing and combating corruption, have a ſtrong claim to their regard and veneration. Or ſhall Mr. Sheridan, who has exhauſted all that eloquence, nervouſneſs, or matter could have comprehended in one ſpeech, and ſtands forth the avowed protector of the oppreſſed inhabitants of Indoſtan—ſhall this man, I ſay, who has outſtepped the high-ſounding fame of Demoſthenes or Cicero, ſtand neuter, when the rights of Engliſhmen, when the rights of that country which gave him birth, education, and honours, are at ſtake? Should his comprehenſive mind and yet unimpeached principles ſubmit to this, he has no

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ſoul, and deſerves not to breathe the common air. If theſe men are only echoes and ſhadows of public virtue, the glory of England is but a dream, and her ſun of greatneſs is near its ſetting.

To return once more to Mr. Pitt—ſhall he, the confidential ſervant to the beſt and moſt virtuous of kings, forget the importance of his high ſtation, and barter his birth-right, and that of his countrymen, for any thing that wealth or rank can give? What trait of his political conduct can juſtify ſo ſevere, ſo ungenerous a ſuſpicion? Laying aſide his hereditary claims to popularity, (for in this age it is become unfaſhionable to aſſume any merit from the virtues of anceſtry) his finiſhed education, cultivated underſtanding, and tranſcendent talents (which are all his own) challenge the reſpect and admiration of even thoſe who profeſs themſelves enemies to the preſent ſyſtem of government. He ſtands no leſs high in the confidence of the people than in that of his royal maſter—"he has done the ſtate ſome ſervice and they know "it." That this extraordinary young man, ſo highly gifted, ſo amply diſtinguiſhed, ſo looked up to, not only by his country but by all the world, ſhould ſo far forget his importance as to deſcend to the mean offices of a partiſan, or leader of a faction, is a monſtrous ſoleciſm in politics, and not reducible to the principles of common ſenſe; that he who can conciliate the eſteem and gratitude,

and

and lay an undoubted claim to the thanks of the braveſt, moſt powerful, and liberal nation now in Europe, ſhould ſo far forego the honours and diſtinctions of his name, as to ſink into the mere tool of what has been commonly called miniſterial intrigue, would be ſuch a ſhameful, ſuch an unpardonable falling off as could be excuſed only by inſanity, or accounted for by the extreme of depravity and political corruption—ſhould a character ſo conſpicuous become inſenſible to the value of the eſtimation of his country, and the bleſſings of the juſt and good; ſhould he, I ſay, renounce his pretenſions to the name of patriot, and to the duties of a virtuous ſtateſman, contempt and ſhame muſt be his portion, nor could the golden ſhower of royal favour ſave him from the execration due to ſuch apoſtacy, nor compenſate him in the ſmalleſt degree for having loſt the moſt ineſtimable of all enjoyments, the approbation of his own mind, the heartfelt conſciouſneſs of having diſcharged his duty, and merited the applauſe and acclamations of a grateful and happy people.

A more juſt and equal repreſentation of the people has been long the great deſideratum of the public:—it leaves the diſcontented an open field for abuſe and invective. Could it be done away with ſafety, or without endangering the tranquillity of the ſtate, it would be well; it would remove all pretence of complaint, and ſilence for ever thoſe

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turbulent agitators, who live only by popular clamour and ſeditious declamation. But it ſhould be remembered, that the times are delicate and full of change; that a rage of reform and innovation has gone abroad, and that

" In ſuch a time as this it is not meet,
" That every nice offence ſhou'd bear its comment."

Neither can the moſt violent advocate for parliamentary reform deny, but that its advantages, however great they may be conceived, exiſt as yet only in theory. Timidity in governments is a vice; but caution and prudence are virtues. Procraſtination is excuſable where the experiment may be unſafe, and its ſucceſs and utility uncertain; but it becomes indiſpenſable in moments of diſguſt and public diſcontent, when the raſhneſs of one unguarded meaſure may lead to evils beyond calculation or remedy. It has been already mentioned, that the eſtabliſhment of unanimity and concord amongſt the ſubjects of the Britiſh empire ſhould be an indiſpenſable and preliminary ſtep towards a reform in parliament. When diſcontents run high, or indeed exiſt, the public tranquillity muſt not be diſturbed; the periods of peace and general harmony can only be favourable to an event of that magnitude. On this ground the virtuous and truly patriotic ſtateſman has an opportunity of ſtepping forth the friend of his country.

If in one part of this empire odious proſcriptions are glaring and uniformly perſiſted in;—if the many, by an unjuſt and ſhameful monopoly, are ſacrificed for the intereſt of the few;—if diſqualifications and penalties are ſtill held out, and a populous, rich, and riſing nation governed on ſuch a ſcale as would diſgrace a ſhabby corporation, or rotten borough;—if ſuch things be, I ſay, is it to be wondered, with the examples which theſe few years paſt have laid before men's eyes, that diſcords ſhould ariſe, and faction ſpeak boldly in the face of day? In Ireland the ſymptoms of diſguſt and diſaffection are too manifeſt to be diſregarded. Should ſudden and irritating meaſures be adopted in that country—ſhould the general voice of an injured and hitherto patient people be treated with neglect or contempt—ſhould that protecting government they look up to, continue ſtill the inſtrument of their diſgrace and perpetual humiliation;—ſhould that people, I ſay, ſee themſelves and their poſterity devoted to an abject and irrevocable ſentence of ſlavery, and that under the nominal protection of your laws, what ſecurity can you have for their affection or allegiance? Would it not be unreaſonable—would it not be abſurd to expect it? Would it not be a blaſphemy againſt the inalienable rights of man, if we may be allowed the uſe of that trite expreſſion?

If this country be crouded with bold and ſeditious ſpirits, whoſe deareſt wiſh it would be to foment the general diſcontent, if in England, where is eſtabliſhed an equality nearly as juſt as ſociety is capable of, diſtruſt and complaints be not unknown, what ſhould it not be in Ireland, where three millions of people conſider themſelves as ſlaves to a monopolizing few of what is called *Proteſtant Aſcendancy?* If thoſe men are allowed to be faithful and loyal ſubjects, and have given the preſent government the moſt undoubted and unequivocal proofs of their allegiance and attachment, why have their humble addreſſes been hitherto treated with ſuch unprovoked contempt? or why was their addreſs to the Lord Lieutenant in the year 1790 refuſed, becauſe it expreſſed a hope, that their grievances would be taken into conſideration? and this at a time when they had made a tender of their lives and fortunes for the defence of a country in which they were neither repreſented nor admitted to the rights of ſubjects! Why muſt they be calumniated and called ſeditious for daring to implore the clemency and juſtice of that government, from whoſe lenity they have already experienced ſome alleviation of their misfortunes?

Although the principal advantages of our unparalleled conſtitution have been long refuſed to the Iriſh, the great body of the people of that country, though labouring under the moſt ſevere proſcriptions, have preſerved the moſt unſhaken loy-

alty. Though the tyranny of the penal laws extended to the mind (a ſpecious of tyranny diſgraceful to human nature), and prohibited them from giving their children any ſort of education, they have ſtill continued faithful and compoſed; but they ſhould not at the preſent moment be inſulted or provoked by the ſhallow and undiſguiſed intrigues which have been practiſed for the vile purpoſes of dividing them. They do not aſk, they even diſavow, an equal participation of the rights of their Proteſtant brethren; they only claim thoſe of Elective Franchiſe and the Right of Juries, which they conceive as indiſpenſably neceſſary for the protection of the lower orders of the tenantry of Ireland, and as highly conducive to the advancement of agricultural induſtry. They look up to the adminiſtration of this kingdom, which, it is ſaid, is not averſe to their emancipation—it would be indeed unjuſt to call their liberality in queſtion; but ſhould the petition of the Iriſh Catholics be ſcornfully thrown out of the Iriſh Houſe, the blame muſt ultimately recur to the Engliſh Cabinet, inaſmuch as the latter is ſuppoſed to have a decided influence over the ſenate of that country.

America has been ſeparated from Great Britain by a precipitancy of meaſures which has been publicly condemned—Ireland reſpectfully petitions, and hopes, from the liberality of government, a redreſs of palpable grievances. Should ſhe alter her tone, ſhould ſhe demand it as a right, and not

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aſk it as a favour, what may be the conſequence? The queſtion is delicate, and ſhould not be far urged.

A Government cannot be juſt in refuſing its protection to a great majority of loyal ſubjects when conſtitutionally petitioned for, nor wiſe in fomenting thoſe diſſenſions and diſcords which have ſo often ſtained the page of hiſtory, and ſhall be ever a diſgrace to the remote annals of Ireland. A diſtinguiſhed member of the Iriſh Senate has ſaid, that a refuſal of their petition would imply the power of a god, and at the ſame time the malignity of a demon. It would be prepoſterous to think that that government, whoſe lenity and beneficence extends to the African and remote Hindoo, ſhould expel from its boſom an humble and ſupplicating people, their own immediate ſubjects. It would be derogating from their dignity to ſuppoſe that the Iriſh ſhould be relieved from mere motives of expediency, from any conſideration of the angry temper of the times—no, their gracious ſovereign will be actuated by other motives, his deciſion will be an emanation of his juſtice and public virtue, and ſhall be recorded as a brilliant inſtance of his magnanimity and the love of his faithful people.

When men become united they become virtuous—their union in the love of their country renders them invincible in its defence. When the cauſes of acrimony and irritation are removed, re-

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forms shall be little talked of, or thought unneceſſary. Thoſe laws which prevent crimes by fomenting public labour, and forwarding the riſing induſtry of a people, are alone grateful to a humane and thinking mind. It has been the misfortune of ſociety, that governments have been hitherto more occupied in the puniſhment than in the prevention of crimes; ſanguinary penalties become neceſſary, principally from the vicious habits of early idleneſs, and a ſhameful neglect of the education and morals of the lower orders of the riſing generation. All men are now induced, from the circumſtances of the times, to hope, that the wiſdom of government will lead them to remedy thoſe evils which ariſe from faction and religious jealouſy, the complaints of diſaffected party, and the acrimony of baneful diſtinctions. A general and liberal ſyſtem of political equality amongſt all the ſubjects of the Britiſh empire, muſt ſoon lead to that moſt ſalutary of all revolutions—the revolution of peace, concord, and harmony. The ſtate of the kingdom at this criſis, as totally unconnected with the contentions and wars which agitate the other nations of Europe, is propitious and highly favourable to this mode of reform—a reform which, far from diſturbing, muſt ſecure and cement for ever the ſtability of the ſtate and the tranquillity of the people.

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